



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





800071798-





CAN WRONG BE RIGHT?

VOL. II.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

CAN WRONG BE RIGHT?

A TALE.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1862.

The right of Translation is reserved.

250. h. 17.



CAN WRONG BE RIGHT?

CHAPTER I.

My resolution was taken. Poor and desolate as I was, and with his child on my breast, I resolved not to disturb its father's happiness. I knew myself strengthened to endure.

What, at all events during the first years of its life, could my child want but me? An idea that I should not be able to support my baby never occurred to me. I was always fearless of want. I had abundance of self-reliance; I felt that power within me which "I will" never fails to produce. While pressing my child to my heart, I

knew I could be sustained through ALL that might come by the consciousness that my husband was happy. The landlady considered it a delicate personal compliment that when my child was baptized I named him Edmund Oswald—signing the name, Edmund Oswald Yevrah. It was, I know, a subterfuge, but by transposing my name I still preserved it, thus catching at a straw, while abandoning a raft. She (the landlady) brought the babe a “true blue” sash and sleeve-knots, so that my son was decked in his father’s colours. My bill at the inn was within my means ; I was astonished at its moderation, and did not know, until long afterwards, that the good Doctor had paid more than the half. The benevolent old man insisted that I should cross the road and pay him a visit, and sent the “Pink” to carry my baby—but I would trust it to no arms save my own.

There were three steps to the hall-door, from which a brilliant brass plate pro-

claimed the name and position of Doctor Ridge; above this towered a knocker sufficiently large for a house in Mayfair. Pink was about to strike upon it, when my old friend opened the door, and led the way to his "consulting room."

Cake was laid out in silver baskets and wine in an engraved decanter, beautiful as Venetian glass.

He made me taste his old Madeira, closed the door, and, seating himself by my side, dropped, as it were, his eyebrows over his eyes, and, after a pause which betrayed embarrassment, he began speaking in a low-measured voice,—

"You are going sooner than you ought to go, young lady. You told us, when the babe was born, that there was no one to whom you could communicate the joyful tidings—no husband, parent, or friend. Forgive us—we are plain spoken—we do not believe this. There *must be* some one who ought to know what rejoices every

good heart, that another child endowed with an immortal soul, is born into the world, who must be taught when to buckle on his armour, and when to take it off with honour. It is a noble calling to train a spirit for time and for eternity. May you be watched over, and taught by the GREAT TEACHER !”

This was delivered in his usual voice, which, so to say, had a prayerful tone; it seemed a beginning to what I dreaded—questioning. It was not.

“I do not wish to inquire into the past; but if there is no one to whom you will write and tell of this infant’s birth, am I right in supposing you have no home to go to?”

“Quite right, Sir.”

“And yet you tell me you are going to London.”

“I desire occupation, and—concealment. I have heard that both can be best found in a crowded city.”

“Most true. May I ask what occupation you would seek?”

I explained to him that I could teach flower-painting and Italian, and that I excelled in embroideries of all kinds.

He told me how miserably needlework was paid for; that he feared I should never be able to subsist by it.

“I was certain I should, when once I had an opportunity of showing what I could do; there was no doubt of it.”

He smiled at my confidence, and after thinking a little, said he could give me an introduction or two—one to a very worthy person, a relative, who was a Court-milliner in Bond Street; and if I was really skilled in needle-craft, he had no doubt she would pay better than most persons. Another to his brother, a merchant in the city; perhaps not of much use, but it would be some one to know—and madam was a rare dresser; she would wear anything that was the fashion, no matter how she looked in it.

Surely people made wonderful sacrifices to fashion who only thought how their clothes looked, without thinking how they became them! Or the young ladies, his nieces, might like to learn flower-painting. They had learned nearly everything that was useless: why might they not learn that?

I thanked him as only the friendless can thank for kindness, and told him I felt the more grateful because he had taken me on trust.

He shook his head, and said, "We can see; we are not blind; we can see a long long way—a doctor is accustomed to see all, and say nothing. We are clear-sighted—very! If ever a friend is wanted, write to us; tell us as much as you please, or as little—only, remember where you can always find a friend."

I murmured something about my debt to him; but he would not hear of it. I told him I had a jewel of value, the relic of former times, which I would dispose of

when I got to London, so that I was quite removed from all fear of present distress.

He had a habit of speaking out his thoughts, mingling what he desired to say with whatever he ought *not* to have said, in a manner sometimes painful and sometimes ludicrous. The most sincere people in the world do not give voice to *all* their thoughts, however resolved to say nothing they do *not* think. Good old man! He asked me to show him the jewel. He drew his spectacles down from his forehead, where they usually rested on his shaggy eyebrows. "A jewel of value!" he repeated once or twice, after examining it with the eye of a connoisseur. "Ay, indeed, a jewel of price! I wonder how she got it? I'll ask her. No I won't; she would not tell; and it would pain her to say what is not true, or to refuse me. She seeks an honest jeweller! not so rare as an honest attorney, or an honest patriot. No. Well, lady, we have lived long enough

to meet with some stray honesties ; queer odds and ends we have met. A sober fox-hunter—a sailor who saved money, and drank no grog—a man who wrote books, yet never talked of them or quarrelled with his publisher—and we were once invited to meet an honest attorney ! We went, but found him so stupid that we did not marvel at his honesty. Oh yes.” Then direct to me—“ We will think. We once knew a dealer in gems (and he was honest though a Jew)—in our youthhood, when we were studying medicine, and when medical students were obliged to dress and speak like gentlemen. We were hard up for money, and determined to sell a fore-finger ring, which had come to us with some few ancestral curiosities, all of which had vanished—been exchanged for gold. We believed the ring paste. We took it by chance into his shop, and like all lads who would rather be caught borrowing than selling, we blushed like a peony while

making the offer; but our good fortune was at hand. The Jew asked us what we wanted for the ring, and gave us six times our demand, saying it was a true diamond. Now——But surely he must be dead long ago——ay, a long time ago.

“ ‘The days when we went gipsying,
A long time ago.’ ”

And, his eyes fixed—large, thoughtful, black-looking eyes—upon the ceiling, he commenced musing—murmuring at intervals—“The days—the days—when we went gipsying, a long—long—long time ago!” The attitude, the expression of his face, the deeply mournful tone in which the words were repeated, brought tears to my eyes; indeed, tears, of late, came to me on all occasions, like old familiars; they relieved me when I wanted relief; only every little emotion called them up, when a healthy resistance would have been better for mind and body. But trials had weak-

ened my nerves—the spirit was brave, the flesh weak; and at that moment he so resembled my father—my dear, tender, loving father—his grave within a two hours' drive, and yet I dared not go there to pray and weep! This thought came upon me with such cruel strength that I could not conquer my emotion, but sat sobbing and gazing at the dear old face—so marked by thought, and care, and memory, and yet so elevated and sublime!

“Ah! poor little thing,” he exclaimed, suddenly recalled to the present, “we fear we cannot help you with the jeweller; and you must not ask our brother, he wouldn't know — his ledgers are *his* jewellers. We were babes at the same breast, had the same nurture, the same education, slept in the same bed, read the same books, played the same games—so alike were our tastes, that we both loved the same girl; and there I became victor, and was married.

We believe *that* love was his last emotion; he gave himself to gold after that—he lived for it, married for it! Poor brother! he would die for it. No, it won't do to ask him; and if madam heard of it, she—who could feed and clothe hundreds with the shreds and scraps of her expenditure—would want it *cheap!* No, no! But ask Mrs. Clary, the milliner. (I hope the fripperies and fineries at Mrs. Clary's won't tempt her to commit any extravagance or foolery. I don't believe in the existence of a woman proof against the temptation of a pretty bonnet. No—I do not! My own poor dear loved it. How she would bow the strings, and pat them down, and smile at them; and lace!—she would be as tender over a pretty bit of lace, as over one of her own new-born babies). Mrs. Clary, my good cousin, could recommend you a trusty worker in gems; she will know—ay—that will do, exactly. And look ye, should you see our brother's wife, not a

word of Mrs. Clary! She repudiates the consanguinity, because Lucy Clary, a clergyman's daughter, — making one of the silent sacrifices with which God is well-pleased — entered into that frippery trade to support a foolish husband, who had lost all control over the small quantity of brains he ever possessed, but madam's mind is bunged down with what she calls 'aristocracy.' All high-born dames enlighten her! The aristocracy of Whitechapel and Spital Square. But the class above is always aristocracy to the class beneath. (I wonder what class she really belongs to! She greatly perplexes me; her pride smells of the aristocracy. But there is at times a starting at her own shadow — not high bred — mingled perhaps — mingled, poor thing). Well, then, you will sell this jewel — but, until you do, you must have money! There, my child, I will lend you these five guineas, which return to me when you

have them to spare. I offer them as a loan: if all comes right, tell me of this debt, that's all. I have had the blessing to set many afloat; but they are like those who were healed in Scripture—not more than one or two have ever returned to say 'I have prospered.'" He gave me sundry instructions about my child. I tried to lead him to talk of Brecken. "Oh, yes—it was the day Sir Oswald and Lady Harvey passed through that you were taken ill—the day of election was now fixed,—there could be no doubt of Sir Oswald's return—he was a fine, good gentleman. Wild, and excitable, and very obstinate; but a glorious gentleman. Why, he had put up a monument to the memory of his old master—the father of the poor girl whom he married in a——But no matter! Fortunately she died; and now Sir Oswald was happy with his only and early love—he him-

self was a believer in only loves, more to his sorrow."

And so we parted; and the following night I was at an inn in the mighty whirl of London. London — of which I had heard so much and knew nothing!

CHAPTER II.

My baby was growing fast into a beauty—the chambermaid declared she had never seen such a darling. And when I told her that the next day I must find out Bond Street, she offered to take care of him. Their busy time, she said, was night, and early morning; and as there was a fog—(it was the end of October, but I had left delicious sunshine behind me)—I had better put him to sleep, and she would watch him—yes, “she would watch him carefully, while I was gone.” It was the first time I had left him, and this, doubtless, added to my bewilderment. I was obliged to take refuge in a lumbering mass of impurity, called a hackney-coach, and be driven to Mrs. Clary’s. There was nothing in her

well-ordered staff and well-appointed rooms to astonish me—I had seen the same sort of thing at Paris, and in all the continental cities we had visited : but I was unprepared for the immensity of London—for the undefined and restless din—the perpetual crowds of people—the wealth, which seemed to roll and swell along the streets—never ending, still beginning—no two faces alike, no two persons apparently intent on the same object. The multitude seemed to me miraculous ;—such tides and counter-tides of human beings ! I trembled at the magnitude—the *life* of London ; it absolutely appalled me !

Mrs. Clary was kind, but “conventional.” She showed me some trimmings of painted velvet and chenille, and inquired if that was my style of work ? I very frankly told her, “No ; I should produce something more natural, yet more artistic.” She drew up daintily, and said they had been more than admired by a Countess, and pa-

tronised to the fullest extent by a Marchioness. "These were the true Venetian trimmings; did I not admire them?"

I was sorry: but I did not.

She shrugged her shoulder just a little, and elevated an eyebrow.

"Could I do better?"

I would try, if she would permit me.

Oh, she would look at whatever I did. She would even lend me the pricking of the flowers to copy, if I wanted hints.

I thanked her, but was firm in the assurance that I could produce what she would like better. Another incredulous shrug and a smile (which she partly concealed by her cousin's letter) replied to this assertion; then she fixed her full eyes on me—cold, moonlight eyes they were—and said, "there was something more, certainly something more I wanted, according to the letter; an honest jeweller; dear old Doctor Ridge seemed to think it difficult to meet with one: no: there was Hamlet!"

“Where did he live?”

She wrote down the address. “Hamlet,” she assured me, “was as well known at St. Paul’s. Also a cheap, safe lodging? Dear old old cousin! he thought London so wicked! Yes, she knew a charming, quiet little place; the man was a messenger, or something of that kind, in the House of Commons—a superior sort of person; and the good mistress she could trust in the busy season with work, she was so punctual and proper;—if it was not too far—it was in the King’s Road, Chelsea, a little beyond Sloane Square. She had often heard her say she would like a—a—lady to live with her. It was a sweet little house, and so cheerful. But she had only one room to let, she knew.”

I had never in my life been confined to “one room,” except at the convent, but I must submit to circumstances; I seemed to be well getting over all my small difficulties. She wished to know if I would

go to Chelsea at once, and see the cottage ? I reminded her of my baby ; and then there was another little shrug, and elevation of eyebrow. I did not expect to like her.

I went from her house to Hamlet's, and was astonished at the heap of gold I received for the bracelet. Ah, how surpassingly generous *he* had been to me, and that without one grain of love. I thought now I had sufficient wealth to meet more than a year's expenditure, and returned my good Doctor the money he had so recently "lent" me. I found my child quite well, and then drove to the cottage at Chelsea. It was a quaint, old-fashioned square house of one storey, crouching within a high railing, and behind a *lignum vite* and an acacia, that shaded it from the observation and dust of the road. There was a door in the middle, leading to an unusually large hall for so small a house ; a parlour to the right, and a bedroom to the left ; a kitchen behind, with sundry sheds, and nooks and corners —

such as keep the poorer English houses in a state of cleanliness and comfort never known abroad. The dwelling was encircled by a fair-sized garden ; and behind flourished a grand old mulberry-tree, that scattered its jetty berries on a circular grassplot. It was one of the venerable remains of the mulberry orchard planted by order of the First James, when he thought to introduce and cultivate the silkworm in England—an attempt that was defeated by the humidity of our climate. At Old Brompton and in Chelsea many of those veterans yet live and flourish. Above the two rooms and hall was a large chamber, which had evidently been, at one time, divided, as there was a fireplace at each end : there were two windows in front, peeping through the trees at the road, another overlooking the garden and the backs of several houses of the better class ; but they were far enough away ; their gardens joined that



of "The Cottage," as the little dwelling was called.

The large room, the sad-looking and faded workwoman told me, was *the* room she wished to let. Contrasted with my cell in the mountain convent it was a palace; compared with my native humble home, or with that I had abandoned, it was almost a hovel: the bed was in a recess, which gave the room a foreign aspect; there were plenty of cupboards, and air and light; more furniture, old-fashioned as it was, than I required, and I would afford myself a thick curtain to exclude the sunbeams (as two windows were due south, the other north) when I wished to avoid the cross light for my work's sake.

"She rather objected to the baby, as it might cry, and Mr. Massey when the House was up was inclined to be '*litery*;' and when Parliament met wanted a quiet sleep in the mornings; but the recess for the bed was over the parlour, and the heavy

curtains I spoke of to divide the rooms might deaden the noise — the carpet, too, was thick — old-fashioned and thick — no such carpets made now-a-days; she would do her best to make me comfortable — more especially as Mrs. Clary had recommended me, for which she was very much obliged. She did not pretend to say she was not glad to have a lodger, although she never intruded herself upon nobody — still it was cheerful, when Mr. Massey was out at nights attending Parliament — it *was* pleasant to know there was some one in the house who, if you *was* murdered, could identify the murderer, and break it gently to Mr. Massey when he came home. After her fingers were worked to the bone, stitching them little *tiddy* flounces for Mrs. Clary, that the ladies delighted in just out of cruelty and contradiction, it *was* lonely, when she wanted a rest, to sit staring at the clock or the cat, awaiting up for ‘my master,’ that he might have something hot

and comfortable after his parli'ment'ry duties. He often said, in a playful way he has (like a two months' kitten)—'Mary,' he says, 'why don't you take to literature, as the 'sociate of your leisure hours? I *may* go down in a Chelsea boat, or be run over at the wide crossing by the Abbey, or be burked any night in Tothill Fields.' O, he's very fine-spoken, and has great knowledge—no woman could be his companion—so I am willing to do all a wife can, in my humble way; and Mr. Massey is very considerate—very considerate, indeed—*for a man!* and I will say there is no cleaner house in Chelsea. And as to my master's linen!—the gentlemen of the House of Commons often say to him—'Massey, who's your laundress?'"

"I suppose," I said—by no means interested in her personal observations, but with thoughts thronging to the future—
"I suppose Mr. Massey knows all the old

Members, and soon becomes acquainted with the new ones ?”

“ Ah !” she replied, “ that he does ; I dread a general election, for as he grows older I know it will be the death of him ; he studies the names and the places, and the line they go in on, and bothers his self as to what they’ll turn to before the session’s over, and worrits about their ancestry. I have had three hot bottles, and no end of mustard-poultices, to put to his feet after a general election, just to get the blood down.”

“ He must have a fund of information.”

“ That he has,” she replied, while her dim eyes lit up in her husband’s praise. “ That he has. The Speaker himself once asked him two or three questions, and he answered so correct, that — ‘ Massey,’ he says, ‘ you are a walking blue-book ! ’ ”

“ And have you ever gone into the House and heard the speeches ?”

“ Never. My master gets in a great

many; and once I asked him to take me; but he said there was no use in my going, for I should not understand what was said. I am sure, if you had any curiosity that way, he would manage somehow for you — particularly if you take an interest in politics — and let him tell you all about the Members, and how such and such a question is to be debated. Often he tires me out at it, and then he says — ‘Mary, put the high-backed chair here, with the mop on it, and I can talk to that as well as to you, and you can go to bed.’ Now, isn’t *that* considerate?”

I should be able to go to the House and *hear* HIM speak; I should know when *he* took his seat, and how *he* looked, and what *he* said, and what was thought of *him*! Surely, Providence had directed me to “The Cottage!”

My landlady was delighted at the improvements I made in my room. My son looked so pretty in his new cradle, and my

curtain gave such an air of comfort and simple elegance to the queer-shaped division, and a pretty cover concealed the deal top of a table. I found it impossible to do without a few ornaments — common enough, but in good taste ; among them a china vase and osier table-basket in which to group my flowers—the latter were my greatest expense. But I was near a magnificent conservatory, and what I could not purchase I could look at.

My child fed and slept away the early part of his existence, and my landlady was electrified by the progress of my raised-flower embroidery. I prepared specimens of two distinct trimmings ; one for the dark-complexioned — the other for the fair. For the dark I arranged deep crimson fuschias, mingled with the creamy-gold roses (called, appropriately, “ the field of the cloth of gold ”), relieved by those cool and refreshing leaves which flowers should never be without : these were grouped and

garlanded on white lace. For the blondes I selected the blue convolvulus, with its delicate tendrils and heart-shaped leaves, mixed with lilies of the valley ; nor could I resist copying a bouquet of monthly roses, which combined four varieties. I felt assured that Mrs. Massey had excited Mrs. Clary's curiosity by her description of my work, and what I created, as she expressed it, "out of a mere nothing — what children waste on baby dolls."

I was mossing the last rosebud of my bouquet, when Mrs. Clary entered with her little sliding courtesy — a courtesy at once shy and patronising: according to her spoken words, she came to "hope I was comfortable," and invite me to tea the following evening. I was, as I have said, mossing a rosebud when she floated into the room, and her furtive glance rested upon my embroidery. She asked permission to see how I worked, and repeated frequently, "It is wonderful! you cannot

imagine how delighted I am." She confessed she had never seen anything so fresh and lovely; she would at once give me an order for the fuschia and roses, provided the price and the time could be managed, and that I would engage not to work for any house but hers, nor take private orders.

I had determined, if I were to trade upon my talent, to make the most of my small capital. I knew that the caprice of one fashion seldom outlived a season, and that Mrs. Clary would prepare "during the dead time of the year" for what she believed would be a success. I had some qualms of conscience while naming my price; and though Mrs. Clary heard it with a little shudder and the usual elevation of her eyebrow, she acceded, provided I would sign an agreement, as she had said, to "work for no other house:" that I engaged to do—the small tea-party I declined.

That matter arranged, and my anxiety as to the means of future existence dispelled, I sat in the twilight — (while lights from the opposite side glittered through the trees like glow-worms) — asking questions of myself. I knew that my life was a living lie: at times I felt so overwhelmed by the consciousness of my own sin, that I have pushed away my Bible, unable to open it; but my strength returned with the conviction of HIS happiness — the belief that my sacrifice came only in time to preserve his life: that was my stronghold; all I possessed — even my child — I would offer up for that!

Hard as I worked, I should still have time for reading; my landlord had a fair store of books, and, as he had gone for two or three months to the country, during the recess, I could ask Mrs. Massey for any I pleased. I also had a newspaper every morning for half an hour. I devoured it day by day greedily, seeking therein only

one name: my landlady often wondered how I had done with it so soon, and never knew anything about what was going on in the world. At last I found *the* name: he had been returned triumphantly! How full of generous, yet tender eloquence was his speech! Every word had its purpose: it was not long, but it was full; there was no vulgar inflation, no abounding promises; he would be tried, he said, by the only truth-prover — TIME. I read it in my delight to our unconscious child, while he, staring at his developing fingers as he lay upon my lap, gradually ceased to move them, and seemed to listen with pleasure to my voice. He was absolutely growing like his father — my darling child! I did not part with *that* paper, and I was so jealous over it, that though poor Mrs. Massey had the toothache (she was always having the toothache), I would not even lend it her. I soon knew every word of the speech by heart, and could repeat it to

myself while at work, or nursing my infant.

I must do Mrs. Clary the justice to say that she did not attempt to find fault with or guide me; on the contrary, whatever I did seemed to give her pleasure. The trimmings, and various other specimens of my art, were displayed in glass-cases in the best light, and she invited me to arrange them; and when I had finished she smiled and flattered, and neither shrugged her shoulder nor raised her eyebrow. Her husband—a pale, deformed, penitent-looking man, with wild, shy eyes, and a short, hectic cough—sometimes walked about the room with a feather dusting-brush, with which he “flicked” the dust from one looking-glass or shade to another—(the show-room was almost lined with looking-glass)—but when a knock came to the door, he retreated—like a spider to its cell when its net is shaken—into a little scrap of a room called the counting-house,

that branched off from the show-room, shut himself in, clambered up a stool to a desk, and bent his head over a day-book or ledger. Whenever I went there I went early; and one morning, when Mrs. Clary was out, found him talking, with unmistakable familiarity, to the pretty perambulating lay figure upon whom caps and bonnets were shown off. The poor girl looked thoroughly disgusted—and I was glad my entrance obliged him to withdraw those wild dissolute eyes from her sweet face.

He shambled up to me, and, with a bow and a leer, asked me, “if I always intended to play the nun in black?”

I made no reply, but prepared to unpin my parcel.

He repeated the question—answering himself by saying, that “black set off the transparency of my complexion.”

I flashed on him a look so full of con-

tempt and bitterness, that he slunk away to his den.

“He is a wretch!” exclaimed the girl. “Mrs. Clary little knows what he is, and we love her too much to tell—it would make her unhappy. All efforts she uses to keep him alive are only from a sense of duty—for she cannot love such a mixture of selfishness and falsehood.”

While she was speaking, a tremendous double knock shook the windows. I could not escape, except into the spider’s cell—so I sat down behind some drapery. There was an immediate rush of steps and voices on the stairs—and the huge bonnets of the day entered long before the heads of the wearers.

Two extra-fashionable young ladies, whose waists certainly could not be shorter without displacing their shoulders, commenced a somewhat rough examination of the treasures of the centre table, tossing everything about; and then, with a shout

of delight, sprang to the glass-case that contained my embroideries. I fancied the girl I had been speaking to knew them, for I observed she slipped out the key.

“Where’s Clary?” they inquired, as if the girl had been a dog, to do their bidding, — “and why does she lock up this? Go down to the carriage, and tell mamma she must come up to look at these beautiful trimmings. Tell her,” added the youngest, “to leave her lame leg behind her.”

“Caroline!” exclaimed the elder, “how can you be so playful before those sort of people?”

“Oh! what matters! there’s no one here. I wonder where old Clary got those lovely things! If mamma would only be a little civil to her, as she is papa’s cousin, we might get bargains — but she won’t. I’m sure Mrs. Clary looks more like a lady than mamma.”

“Fie! Caroline! you are so funny,” said the elder, who spoke with a lisp, and

looked a fool. Turning sharply round, the speaker pulled down the drapery that concealed me. She gave a little scream, and then rudely said — “What are you hiding for? and why don’t you stand up? Mrs. Clary should teach her young people better manners.”

“I am not one of Mrs. Clary’s young people,” I said, without moving.

My calmness disconcerted, and my plainness perplexed, her. I looked as I felt — disgusted with a daughter who could speak of a mother as she had spoken. Presently the old lady limped heavily in. I rose, brought her a chair, and placed it in front of the glass-case. There was nothing to command respect about her, except her age. She turned her face towards me, and I believe thanked me, in a guttural tone — staring at me as much as her daughters. They were Doctor Ridge’s relatives — no wonder they did

not assimilate with him, dear good old man!

Mrs. Clary came in at the moment, and did not see me. The daughters were loud in their praise of the embroideries. The mother, with more cunning though less rudeness, undervalued them.

“Who had patronised them?” she inquired. “How could Mrs. Clary tell that they would take? They had not been tried yet. She thought them very gaudy and common,—just like natural flowers, nothing more. Might just as well go into “our own” conservatory — that was forty feet by fifty ——”

“Fifty, you mean, by forty, I suppose!” interrupted Miss Caroline, with her pert, snappish voice.

“Well, suppose so; it might be; fifty by forty, then; gather the flowers and stick them on — look just as well as those — easy enough to *bundle* up flowers that

fashion; but she would like to know *who* had seen and thought much of them?"

"Some of our best customers," replied Mrs. Clary; "the Duchess of Laudersand and the Ladies Pentland, who called, just returned from abroad, and *en route* to the country; they had purchased at Naples a bag — flowers embroidered on lace in the same style — and the Duchess most kindly — she was indeed (so were all Mrs. Clary's 'ladies of rank') a perfect angel — brought it to show her. What was her astonishment and delight to find a counterpart of the fuschias in that very trimming! It might, perhaps, be worked by the same hands."

"But, how could that be?" inquired both the young ladies, animated by contradiction and curiosity. "How could that possibly be?"

Mrs. Clary knew the advantage of a mystery; it increased the value of an article twenty per cent. She drew herself

up, with the usual elevation of eyebrow, and said that "she must be excused from answering any questions about that embroidery; she was bound to secrecy; it was there for any lady who pleased to purchase or order; of course, it must be very expensive, as there was only one pair of hands in England that could embroider it."

"Then," snapped up Miss Caroline, "it is worked in England?"

"It may be embroidered this week in England, and next week in Paris, and next month in Naples," replied the adroit Mrs. Clary; "but Englishwomen, we all know, are not as clever with their needle as Frenchwomen."

"But all that does not prove it will take in the fashionable world," said the mother.

"The Duchess of Laudersand bespoke two for the season," answered Mrs. Clary, "and was so good as to show the fuschia-pattern at Windsor; and I have this mo-

ment come from the Mistress of the Robes, who has been commanded by the Queen to order the various specimens to be taken to the Palace. I am to go to Windsor with them to-morrow."

"O, *cousin* Clary! and shall you see the Royal family?" was the immediate inquiry. "O, how I should like to have exactly the same trimming as the Queen!"

"Pho, pho!" exclaimed her awful mother; "you, indeed! The same trimming on you as on the Queen's train! I think I see Maxwell Ridge's daughter dressed Queen-fashion! Why, the Lady Mayoress could wish no more than that. But what an honour for you, Mistress Clary! You really must come to us on Sunday, and tell us everything you saw at Windsor, and what happened. Now, do come, like a dear woman!"

Mrs. Clary had told me it was nine years since she had been invited to break bread in her cousin's house; but I saw by the

expression of her face — or rather of her mouth — that she valued the invitation at its proper worth. Except her mouth, all her face was in excellent training.

“The Ladies Paterson have exquisite taste,” persisted Mrs. Clary; “and they have bespoke the blue trimmings for their Court-train and petticoat,— on white lustring they will look lovely.”

Mrs. Ridge changed her opinion; she could not withstand such testimony—

“Well, to be sure, they were natural; but there was no use in looking at them for her girls at the pretty penny she would want for them first hand.”

“Lady Harvey, also, the wife of the new Member for —shire (such a lovely creature! certain to be the leading beauty next season), had ordered the fuschia and cream-rose trimming for her presentation. She was here this morning before eight —so like her— such spirits— caught at and ordered it at once!”

I do not know how I escaped from the room, which seemed to me in flames. I did not gather home my senses until I had knelt beside my sleeping child.

CHAPTER III.

I NEED not worry you, Mary, nor waste my thoughts and memories by recapitulating the daily or weekly detail of my hard-working life during the earlier months of my London experience. It was more than a blessing that, had I ten pair of hands, I could have employed them all. I hugged this incessant labour to my heart. I was working for a high purpose. If I wearied — for the flesh will weary, and drag the spirit down — I knelt beside my sleeping child, or played with, or nursed him, and was at once strengthened and refreshed. I was glad to receive a girl, recommended by Mrs. Clary, to cut out leaves and prepare my materials. She also took loving care of my boy, when I

thought it right he should be in the open air, or when I was obliged to be absent.

I only went into the streets, in my perpetual mourning dress, during the early morning, and happily avoided meeting the good Doctor's relatives, or any of Mrs. Clary's customers. It interested me to observe how the care and manœuvring of the fashionable tradeswoman warred with the natural kindness of Mrs. Clary's veritable woman's heart. The Legislature, in these days, has done its best to destroy the sanctity of marriage, by degrading what, in God's sight, is a holy bond, into a civil contract ; but, were poor Mrs. Clary alive now, I solemnly believe she would have hidden the thorns of her unhappy marriage within her bosom, regardless of how they lacerated her flesh — now, as then — and suffered them to eat into her heart rather than lay bare her "troubles" to the outer world. The gossiping "sympathy" of a chattering sisterhood would have been

an insult instead of a relief to her feelings ; enjoying the old-fashioned notion that the very name of " husband " was an honour and a protection, she contrived to make all who were not behind the little scenes of her household believe her husband a suffering saint. Even behind the scenes, she simply shook her head, and observed that " poor Mr. Clary's sufferings had made him *very eccentric !* " You might call my politic patient Mrs. Clary a fool-slave, but I called her, when out of the show-room, a brave Christian woman. Any slur on her husband she would have resented as the greatest possible insult to herself ; in that, she was the wisest of womankind.

I have often since then thought how wonderfully I escaped any questioning as to my position — everybody took it for granted I was a widow. I avoided all acquaintance. I knew the fashion of my trimmings would soon pass away, and I economized to accumulate while the fashion

lasted. I had, as I have said, a high purpose — I must save for my child, and be prepared with some novelty to meet the demand for novelty. I began teaching myself Latin, that I might be able to teach my boy; and have sat hours at my embroidery with a Latin grammar on the table, committing portions to memory as I could. For a time, at all events, I had deprived my own child of his birthright — but he must be educated as became his birth. *When the time came*, his father must not be ashamed to acknowledge him. I theorized upon this beautifully! little thinking of the difference between theory and practice.

My darling child! Even while his little nubby hands moulded themselves into form, imperceptibly but surely I recognised the taper fingers and somewhat-turned-back thumbs of Sir Oswald — the well-opened hand, that indicates the liberal heart.

What a living joy was my boy to me! and yet my master-passion triumphed all the same. No matter what called up new thoughts or feelings, they all turned to HIM. I became impatient for my landlord's return, and for the meeting of Parliament, that I might hear of—perhaps *see*—the one for whom I had sacrificed so much. I am sure, if my poor landlady ever thought or reasoned, she must have been perplexed to discover why I cared to know when her husband was expected. It became evident at last that “the master” was at hand; everything was renovated; the cottage was in a perpetual state of agitation—such window-cleaning, and chamber-dusting, and carpet-shaking; and my little work-girl was instructed that when the master came home, she must go softly up stairs, and be sure not to crow and tattle to the baby as she came in, for the master would not be disturbed in his reading or his nap; and she must not jump out of

bed in the morning, as it would make the master nervous; and it would be as well to keep out of his way if he walked with his hands in his pockets; if indeed he folded them behind his back he was all right, and in the sweetest of tempers — she might then dance baby in the sun, and even make rabbits on the wall to amuse him.

How she did labour to set rooms in order that were never disordered! But it was slave-labour, not the labour of love: she trembled while she wrought. I observed that she made a great many purposeless knocks at my door, and when I said "Come in," she entered nervously, her fingers twiddling at the strings of her apron, and went out again without relieving her mind of its burden, merely giving me the information that she hoped "the master" would not find out there had been a moth in his best great coat, or that the leather of his arm-chair had been

scratched by Mrs. Marley's cat — (Mrs. Marley living in the next cottage, and being the "blue devil" of my poor landlady's life) — or to tell me that, "all she could say, Mrs. Marley would not cut the wings of the silver bantam, and that there would be dreadful work when 'the master' came if the bantam flew over the wall — for he would never stand it — he was such a man !"

At last her knocks and her nothings wearied me, and I asked her to say what she wished at once, and trouble me no more. "Oh, would I forgive her ? — the master would be certain to ask her if — if — my husband were dead or alive. What should she say ? — she did not dare to say she did not know — she hoped I would not be offended ; but he was such a man ! — so particular !"

My spirit rose at this ; and I told her, if she was not content with what Mrs. Clary had told her I would seek another lodging.

The poor woman trembled like a moon-beam;—"begged my pardon; she was fully satisfied; proud to have me; any one could see I was quite the lady; never could wish a better—she would say that; it was only 'the master;' would I forgive her?—surely he could go to Mrs. Clary himself—that would be best."

I told her the "best" would be, that I should leave. The poor creature was so feeble-minded that she knelt to me not to think of it. Mrs. Clary would never employ her again if she thought she had so spoken. I never saw one living creature so afraid of another as she was of her husband—and yet she loved him, after her own timid fashion.

At last he came — stalking into the cottage, the very impersonation of command.

Imagine a spare form and face from which every unnecessary ounce of flesh and feeling has vanished—in manner a

compound of old-world priggishness and precision—believing so thoroughly in himself that he had no belief to spare for any other object—treating his poor, weak, “tooth-achy” wife as if she were sufficiently blessed by existing in his shadow—never taking her into consideration, or thinking she could hear or feel; scrupulously honest and correct in all his dealings; one of those odious men he was, who had never (as he had the wrong-headedness to boast) during his life been a single minute too soon or too late for an appointment since he was twelve years old, but taking good care not to tell you how long ago that was. His highly-starched cravat looked as if it could have concealed any amount of old parchments within its folds, and it was believed that he slept in a blue dress-coat illumined by gilt buttons; his shoe-tie alone vouched for his respectability. He always made me a low bow, wasting a minute of my time, and addressed me as

“Madam;” he was prosy and prolix to an extent I had never before experienced. But I endured the “bows” and the “Madaming,” and his long descriptions of the Speaker’s wig, and a story about some man connected with the House who had been guilty of the heinous sin of robbing the “woolsacks,” and filling it, or them, with sawdust and *pepper* ! and when some heavy Lord sat down heavily, the sawdust and pepper (he affirmed it *was* pepper) burst forth in clouds, and set all the nobles sneezing. Well, I listened to this, and dissertations on Shakespeare and Milton, and would have listened twice as long, just to gain my object. After the opening of Parliament, he told me the birth and parentage of every titled Member who had taken “the oaths” and “his seat”—commencing after the fashion of the Peerage—in a hard, clear voice, taking but little trouble with those who, as he said, “were mere Commoners.” At last came the informa-

tion I desired. I placed myself in his way while he promenaded the straight gravel-walk in his garden — one hand in the bosom of his coat, the other holding a book. I was greeted by the stately bow, and “Good morning, Madam ;” and in return inquired if there was any news ?— (to tell Parliament news was his delight — he gloried in it.)

“We swore in two new Members last night, Madam,” was the reply. “A Mr. Menzies, from Scotland, a very proper man, I dare say, for the Borough—a portly man too for a Scotchman ; and not having sandy hair, I dare say his constituents will not have any cause to find fault with him ; but I should certainly not have placed him first — only, we get rid of the froth before we come to the substance. I now name Sir Oswald Harvey, seventh Baronet, the creation in 1665, son of Lieutenant-Col. Sir Hamilton Oswald Gray Harvey, by the only daughter of General Kirk, of Bar-

rayne, near Falmouth, born at Brecken Hall, in Hertfordshire, in 17 — ; married Millicent, daughter of — nobody particular ; married, secondly, Caroline, only child and heiress of the Rev. Edward Mansfeld, of the Grange, same county. Residence, Brecken Hall ; and Grosvenor Place, London. Sir Oswald, Madam, is a fine man ; would have added beauty as well as dignity to the Court of the Regency — the Prince would have understood the value of such a man at Carlton Palace, and created him a Peer in a week. Why, Madam, I heard many Members speaking of him and his beautiful lady. They say she will be the *belle* of the season, and that Sir Oswald and Lady Harvey are the handsomest couple in England. Her Ladyship was in the House last night, but I did not see her. My position is a very onerous one — I attend to my duties, I hope, faithfully.”

I told him I was certain of it ; added a few words of compliment, and slid in a

question carefully — a sort of half inquiry — if ladies not the wives of Members were ever admitted ?

“ O yes, they were, by favour,— a horrid place over the ventilator ; but many ladies dressed themselves boy-fashion, and got in among the reporters — they were better off there.”

I inquired how that was managed, and with a very pompous bow was informed *he* managed *that*, and matters much more difficult.

If ever I was guilty of meanness in my life, it was in the patience and civilities I bestowed upon that disagreeable man. He never touched upon the subject which, for once, had created in his wife such painful curiosity. I listened to him, and he respected me. I ought to have learned the Peerage by heart : I ought to have known the name and fame of every Member of the House of Commons. I tried to remember what was “ brought before the

House," and the heads, at least, of the best speeches. The man was certainly full-primed on all those subjects; and, finding for the first time within his home an intelligent listener, he no longer considered it "the grave of intellect," but absolutely talked *to* his wife! — before, he only talked *at* her. I helped this harmony. He hated the toothache, and having heard of a specific, I made her a present of a bottle, and in her simplicity she believed herself cured — though my faith was that the offending tooth had been swallowed in her sleep; for she informed me she had hardly spoken a word one particular day, as her tongue had been looking for a tooth that had gone somehow, somewhere, and could not find it.

I should pity men in any condition of life who marry fools, did they not so frequently forget that such fools have feelings. Some of the most gentle-hearted women I have ever met have been very unintellectual. But this did not chill their lovingness;

though they could not *reason*, they could *feel*: and so could my poor landlady—*she* could feel! But, as to reason! she could not give a reason for anything she did or said—not even for threading her needle. They were great trials to each other, these two people—very great trials—and yet, perhaps, neither could have been so well off if otherwise mated. I have often observed, in matrimonial jars, that with a different wife or a different husband matters would be worse, not better, and have arrived at the conclusion that the fault was neither in the wife nor in the husband, but in being married at all. An unyielding woman and a tyrannical man can only be peaceable and respectable members of society by continuing single.

A married woman had better be born dumb, than establish confidential communication with any living being on the subject of her husband's faults or failings: and a man who condescends to impart his do-

mestic trials and grumble at his wife, is not a man, but a valueless, pitiful item. Let him either redress his own wrongs, or learn how to bear them in silent dignity. Such confidences beget not sympathy, but contempt ; it is impossible not to desire to spurn a man who slanders his domestic hearth. I resolved to teach my boy, if his cross could not be put away, to take it up and bear it, through life, in silence. My boy ! How I had robbed him ! and how I coveted knowledge, that I might render him worthy of the hereafter that was tramping ever slowly but surely—even while I was trembling in anticipation of the hour when, by that man's help, I should hear my husband's voice in the Senate of his country.

CHAPTER IV.

THE leading newspaper of the day contained the following:—

“ During the last night of the protracted debate which has excited so much interest, and was wound up in the Commons by Sir Oswald Harvey’s eloquent speech, recalling by its power no less than by its beauty the electric oratory of a past age, a little incident occurred which, though almost too trifling to record, has been much talked of at the clubs.

“ As the honourable member retired after the cheering that greeted him from all sides of the House, there was a rush to the lobby—some desiring to offer their congratulations, others eager to satisfy their curiosity by another look at the

'new orator.' The cheering was repeatedly renewed while Sir Oswald, faint and exhausted, leaning on a friend's arm, made his way to his carriage, where Lady Harvey, as usual, waited his coming.

"A 'reporter,' who, it is said, was totally unknown to any of his brethren of the Press, attempting to cross from the light to the dark side of the lobby, stumbled; whilst endeavouring to save himself, his hat fell off, discovering more hair than is usually cultivated by 'lords of the creation.' The gentleman did not wait to recover his hat, but disappeared amid the crowd, that was greater without than within the walls of St. Stephen's; and the incident would hardly have been observed had not the person attracted the attention of the honourable member for H——, his appearance, it is said, recalling the memory of a very dear friend. After some delay, Sir Oswald was assisted to his carriage. Inquiries at the honourable baronet's residence in Grosvenor

Place have been more numerous than could have even been anticipated, and the replies were that Sir Oswald was suffering from fatigue, and was about to leave town for a week's rest.

“ We are authorised to state, that the police have received instructions to endeavour to discover who the gentleman was that intruded himself among the reporters.”

Another paper set forth that —

“ The doorkeepers of the House of Commons have been closely questioned as to what strangers were present during the debate when Sir Oswald Harvey electrified the House ; but such numbers had been admitted that we believe it impossible for them to give anything like a correct return. It is rumoured that a determination has been come to, and is to be acted upon, that, except *by a Member's order*, no stranger be permitted to enter the House. This is as it should be.”

Another paragraph : —

“We rejoice to hear that Sir Oswald and Lady Harvey have returned to their house in Grosvenor Place. They attend the Queen’s ball to-morrow night. Lady Harvey’s jewels have attracted crowds to Hamlet’s, where they have been re-set in accordance with her Ladyship’s designs.”

Another : —

“There was no symptom of nervousness in Sir Oswald Harvey’s brilliant speech last night. We are rejoiced to announce that the honourable baronet has quite recovered from his indisposition, which was simply the result of over-exertion.”

I was the cause of all this excitement; but I could not help it, Mary—I could not help it!

Sir Oswald Harvey had become the popular man of his time. It was not the flimsy, silky popularity of a “fashionable speaker” — not the popularity that follows a man’s footsteps, and floats around him like a perfume, sweet and evanescent; it was admira-

tion, respect, and that wonderful power over the affections of all who came within the sound of his voice. No one doubted Sir Oswald's integrity—no one questioned his motives. Old grumbling, sturdy politicians—men hardened in their own opinions, and practised in combat and contradiction, determined supporters of "measures, not men," who had looked the Speaker in the face for half a century, who pinned their faith to the past, and had no faith in the future—felt strange and uncomfortable at being taken out of themselves—compelled to listen, and unable to reply, even when required to do so by the forms of the House.

Prosperous were the charities that could prevail upon him to preside at their annual dinners, where hands and knife-handles riot in applause over the "liberal donation" which is as nothing to the rich gift-giver, and pass in silence the pound of the poor man who can ill spare it. The richest

and fairest in the land considered their *fête* crowned by the presence of Sir Oswald Harvey; it was believed that one of the most original and remarkable volumes — small in its number of pages, but marvellous in thought and originality — was from HIS pen; it was said at the clubs, that if Sir Oswald could be spared from the “Lower” he would be elevated to the “Upper” House. And all this came like successive flashes of lightning — there was no time to ask “How is it?” None. Never did a man achieve popularity so rapidly; and, according to report, Lady Harvey seemed content to play the part a good wife should — shining in borrowed light. She followed his footprints, and cared for no separate existence; those who could not comprehend *him*, appreciated her — her beauty, wit, and devotedness. Lawrence painted her portrait, and Russell Square was thronged by carriages of the fashionable world who went to see it! All

the glasses at the Opera were levelled at her box ; and there was a universal " buzz " round the House when she entered, as though she had been a crowned queen : still, if a stranger inquired who was it that eclipsed all other lights, the reply would not have been " Lady Harvey," but " the wife of Sir Oswald Harvey." If I chronicle my feelings truly, I was not jealous of this : I only thought of her then as I did previously—as necessary to Sir Oswald's happiness. At times I could not see the injustice I had done her by placing her in a false position ; I could only think what I would have given to be as she was. One year of such existence seemed to me worth a whole life's after-suffering ; to know, to feel, that she was loved by him, *that* was first and greatest—then, to live alike in his sunshine and in his shadow—to feel that, amid the approbation of the whole world, it was only her praise that could make his heart beat, or send the flush of vital happi-

ness to his pale cheek! But though I worked with treble my usual rapidity, and though each moment my boy grew more deeply into my heart, yet I could no longer repress the almost insane desire I cherished to see Sir Oswald. If I could hear him speak only a few words, I believed they would satisfy me now and stimulate me for years. I thought of this again and again—I thought of little else. The session was nearly over. Not to hear his voice until another year was gone seemed to me as if I should be plunged in total darkness. I had stood for hours under the trees that overshadow that dim, dusky wall opposite the Grosvenor Place houses, just to see him pass to his carriage. I had mingled with the crowd that mob the Levees; but amid the princes and nobles of the land I only saw *one* face—not radiant, as I expected, with smiles and triumph, but earnest and careworn. How was it? What could have gathered over that brow? What pressure

closed those eloquent lips so tightly? He *must* be happy. Had I not resigned my all in life to make him so? I was miserable—I had seen only, as it were, his statue; I panted to see the *soul* beam forth—to hear his voice. I determined I would hear it in the Senate-house,—that would content me. But how? How could I, an embroideress, gain admission to the Ventilator, where ladies of the highest rank jostled each other for “peeps” at the “English Cicero?” How could I accomplish my heart’s desire? From the first moment I heard that my landlord was one of the doorkeepers, I resolved, as you have seen, to “bide my time,” and prevail on him to aid my design. But he was difficult to manage—very difficult; still, I clung to my purpose. Were it right or wrong, I confess that, having once deliberately formed, I never relinquished, an object.

There are some men, the exercise of whose influence can be bought only by

gold. Many are proof against it; but there are few who cannot be moulded as potter's clay by flattery. Of course I do not mean the broad-cast of compliments, the fulsome laudation, with which one speaker drenches another at public meetings. It has sometimes moved me to bitter indignation, even at religious gatherings, to listen to the flattery so steeped in oil that I thought all men must turn from it loathingly—actually giving to the creature the homage which belonged only to the Creator; and yet, men who were supposed to trample all the vanities of the world under their feet bowed to and accepted it with evident belief in its fitness. A delicately-minded man turns sick at such wholesale ovation; but, Mary, even the sensitive man is as open as the self-exalted to its influence, if it be delicately applied. There are more dangerous flatteries than those that flow from the lip; a world of admiration may be conveyed by a bright

and sudden smile—one well-directed phrase, a tender intonation of the voice, a look of delighted astonishment, will gratify the vanity of a true-born gentleman, who would reject a full-bodied public dinner-compliment as an insult. There are few men, and fewer women, who cannot be wooed and won to a purpose by judicious and tender flattery. The vanity of one is not the vanity of another—only, mark you, under some disguise or another, wherever there is not vanity there is pride; or where pride is not, there is vanity. Learn what is the most palatable sacrifice to the one or the other, and you can hold the man or woman within the palm of your hand. But few people, or few objects, are worth the sacrifice—a sacrifice that demands the relinquishment of all that is independent in yourself; yet there is one homage which all men specially value when rendered by our sex—the *homage of silence*. A good listener is far more popular with mankind

in general than the most accomplished or most beautiful woman can hope to be. Extinguish self altogether, and LISTEN! No man can withstand that. A good listener—a good listener, my dear Mary, can always accomplish her purpose. A woman may carry any point, either with a wise man or a fool, if she will only listen; not listlessly—surely not—but with interest and attention.

I have poised the needle over my embroidery for ten minutes at a time to prove to my landlord how attentively I listened!

No matter how pre-engrossed by my baby, I listened to my landlord. I “listened” to the same stories over and over again, with what seemed to him unflagging interest. If half dead from the weariness of monotonous work, I brightened and “listened” to the most trivial tale of “the House.” He believed he had taught me to look upon “*the House*” as the only portal to immortality.

I listened to all about that unfortunate man "The Speaker," who was doomed to keep silence under the infliction of the greatest amount of nonsense as well as the highest displays of intellect. I sympathized with the Speaker; but I was the worst off of the two, for what I listened to was all nonsense—and nonsense done into bad English, which made it worse. How that man venerated THE SPEAKER! He had a curl of some bygone Speaker's wig, which he preserved in what he called Lord Thurloe's snuff-box; and he seemed to forget that he had shown it to me before, and presented it for my inspection, day after day, with a reverend air, as if he was unworthy to possess so rare a relic.

Of course, I endured all this for a purpose. I feared he might have opposed my wish, or suspected there was some mystery in my desire to hear Sir Oswald: any other man would; but he attributed it to my respect for "the *House*"—*that* was his ab-

sorbing idea. He provided me with the disguise that enabled me on such a night of excitement and confusion to pass in with the reporters ; but, unfortunately, the loss of my hat, while rushing out, created the sensation that you have seen proved a god-send to the newspapers. I know not how I escaped. I can never forget Sir Oswald's look of horror, nor the spring he made to seize me, as if he would have grasped a phantom. At one moment his fingers were on my arm ; but I rushed wildly at the door, and passed under more than one carriage, at the risk of my life. The mob, fortunately, were pre-occupied, watching for the exit of the great orator. "The people" appreciate and feel the spell of eloquence, and are easily led captive even by its echo. Were it more common it might be less powerful. At all events, it favoured my escape that they watched for him. Dizzy and bewildered, the thrill of his touch still vibrating through my frame,

his presence seemed with me, guiding me to a less crowded locality. There I paused to recover breath ; and the influence, or whatever illusion it was, seemed to pass down a dark street, where I feared to follow. At last I discovered that I was lost amid the labyrinths of Old Westminster. I had quitted the more intellectual for the debased crowd of barefaced sinners, drunken men and leering women—children smelling of gin, and literally clothed in dirt. I stumbled over the rugged pavement, and at last, thoroughly terrified and exhausted, I leaned against a pillar of the dilapidated doorway of an old-fashioned “gin-shop”—an edifice since replaced by the more attractive and far more dangerous “gin-palace.”

“Is it out or in you’re going?” inquired a rough voice, in an accent at that time quite new to me ; “and is it boy or girl ye are, with your soft white face and silky hair, and your make-believe manishness ? Where

do you want to go at all? Save us! you look fairy-struck."

"I want to get to Chelsea."

"To Chelsea, is it? Why, then, God help you, what have you been afther? But sure, if you did tell me, it's a lie you'd tell, and so never heed it. Stay — I'll take ye a piece of the road, for, boy or girl, this is no place for ye, if ye're honest."

I can recall the tone of that voice at this moment. The speaker wore a man's battered hat over a handkerchief that partially covered her grey hair — and a man's tattered coat over some remnants of woman's rags. She smelt abominably, and walked with a fearless swagger, elbowing her way, and giving a word or a jest, which was quickly returned by those who evidently knew her. She was not drunk, poor wretch — nor was she sober. She turned round every half minute to ascertain if I followed closely, and to give me a word of advice. Her queer intonation and strong metaphors

roused me ; and the Pandemonium through which I passed was so horrible, that I would have taken refuge in a hackney coach if I could have seen one. I kept mentally questioning if those weird, haggard, fierce or despairing creatures were of the same flesh and blood as those I had seen in that august assembly — instinct with life, bright with intelligence. Was *this* world and *that* world the same ? What a contrast ! under the shadow of those grand old turrets of Westminster !

“ You’re not pleasant company, my dear,” she said, making a sudden pause ; “ the five fields is lonesome, so you’d better take the lower Chelsea road, and don’t be out this way again ! ”

I placed a few pence in her hand, and thanked her.

“ You’re kindly welcome—kindly,” was the reply ; “ and so is any young creature, just for the sake of him I shall never see again.”

“ Your son ? ”


“ That same.”

“ Dead ? ”

“ Thru for you — dead.”

“ But you will meet again.”

“ Meet again ! ” she repeated, glaring on me like a wild beast, and shaking her tatters ; “ *me* meet my boy again ! Why, he’s in heaven, dear ! In heaven, as sure as light is light — *in heaven !* — in heaven straight, without a taste of purgatory or a priest’s prayer. What do you think of me now to have been *his mother* ? — the mother of as good a boy as ever stepped in or out of shoe-leather ? It’s not aisy to believe — is it ? Only what troubles me is, I shall never, *never* see him, not if I suffered forty deaths. He’s up there ! — one of the stars, maybe ; and he’ll go higher and higher, while I go lower and lower. The last time I went to the priest I asked him, and he says it will take a thousand years in purgatory, maybe more, before I’m any way




clane, let alone in a state for heaven. So I've no chance — never, *never* see my boy again! I know more than you think — a great deal more; and it sinks me. I know about the 'great gulf fixed.' It's not the drop of wather I'd ask for to cool my tongue, for I know it deserves the burning; no, it's for one look of my child in glory."

She threw herself on a door-step in an agony, and from beneath the heap of rags came forth the wail — "One look of my child in glory!" The next instant she was having a stand-up fight with an old watchman who commanded her to "move on." I rushed towards home, and when I arrived — letting myself in to avoid the servant's observation, and overpowered by what I felt but could not define — I sobbed myself to sleep beside my child, just as the rising sun was triumphing over the grey dawn of morning.

CHAPTER V

THE incidents in this portion of my life were like a piece of mosaic, one atom fitting into another so as to make the whole complete, but each of little value in itself — atoms all!

I felt assured that Sir Oswald's delicate and nervous temperament must have been fearfully shattered by the likeness of the intruder to the departed woman; and I knew that scene would haunt him as a fearful vision for months to come. I remembered how acutely he suffered from an over-excited imagination at all times; and I, who had sacrificed my all, such as it was — but it *was* my all of happiness — to ensure his — I, by my impotent curiosity, had troubled him at the very time when affection



should soothe and lull the excitement produced by the inevitable wear and tear of public life.

Was I born to be the curse of what I loved? Strange as it may seem, my landlord was fortunately ignorant of my being the "Reporter" who had created such a turmoil. He was not on duty at the principal entrance, but told me the story the next day with great solemnity, believing that Sir Oswald Harvey's over-tasked brain had conjured up something — he knew not what. He slurred over the matter afterwards as detracting in some degree from the dignity of the House of Commons; and though I discovered the extracts you have read among the papers he brought home, they were not alluded to by him. The session drew rapidly to a close — the last speech was spoken, the last Drawing-room over, the Opera closed — and London, until after Christmas, obliterated from the map of the fashionable world. From every

“house of business” extra hands were dismissed — to exist where they could, and how they could. God help those poor girls! Inoculated with a love of finery — trained to believe in “dress” as the one thing needful, and to witness every species of extravagance, *they* are expected to “dress” becomingly and support themselves in discretion and honour upon eighteen-pence a day — and “their tea!” while their employers take it for granted they continue in a state of virtuous indifference to the temptations and necessities of life, when deprived of every legitimate means of obtaining the “daily bread” there seems no loyal way of procuring for seven months out of twelve.

I knew more than one such, but one especially, at Mrs. Clary’s — a girl of an impatient temper but affectionate heart. She used to come to me with messages from our employer, and during the season often brought my boy a little cheap toy, or

an apple, or cake ;— such gifts, however trifling, make the highway to a mother's heart. She told me there was an old grandmother entirely dependent on her, but that at the end of " the season " she feared she must resign her to the workhouse— she could not lay by a farthing— she could barely exist. There were no needlewomen's societies then, to give even a stinted employment all the year round, bridging the chasm— vice and starvation on the one side, industry and protection on the other.* If I had invited her to help

* I rejoice at an opportunity of drawing my readers' attention to the advantage of helping women, *who have not fallen*, to keep their good name by means of the employment offered at the " NEEDLEWOMAN'S INSTITUTION." However small the remuneration, the employment is continuous—is not dependent upon the caprice of fashion, but on the actual needs of our fellow-beings. We want branch Societies from the parent tree, No. 2 in HINDE STREET, to be established, not only in our Metropolitan districts—(I know one in Chelsea, under the protection of the Rector and some good ladies)—

me, I must have displaced the poor girl I employed, who had done my bidding and

but in our Provincial towns and larger villages. We want an increase to our Government contract—we can make tens of thousands of shirts, and of “every thing,” if they will give them to us! We want our sailors and soldiers to have all their “inner garments” made at “the Needlewomen’s Societies.” We can do all the plain work for all the *trousseaux* of all the brides in England. We can furnish no end of “baby baskets.” We can do household work neater and better than the householders, and, if their time is of value, cheaper. Will ladies come and judge for themselves? Will they visit us? Will they help us to keep our human sisters pure by permitting them to earn their “bit of bread” by the labour of honest hands? It is all they ask—it is all we ask for them! The winter is already with us, but *work* will warm it; provisions are dear—*work* will procure them; they for whom we plead live in an atmosphere of moral danger—*work* will purify it. It seems so hard to earnestly seek employment, and to be told there is none, when we know there is plenty, if it were only thrown into the right channel! No job of work is too small, no quantity too large for our performance. REFORMATORIES are good—but PROTECTION is better. If it be a truism that “Prevention is better

served me faithfully, and who had not even the tie of an aged grandmother to firm her exertions.

Poor Sarah was, like all her class, fond of dress. If she had not been, she would not have suited Mrs. Clary. I saw a downward progress in her mind, and tried to check it.

“Why should she be worse off than others? Girls who kept right were not as well off as those who went wrong. What was a poor girl to do when the season was over? How could she go home to her grandmother and see her silently starving? She was trying for a lady’s-maid’s place — but she was only a work-girl, and Mrs. Clary did not think her fit for it; she had no character — no one would take a needle-girl as a housemaid. God knew, she wished to do *right*.”

than cure,” surely it is so here! Help us, ladies! sisters of the truest charity! Help us with your influence—help us by your presence—help us with WORK for our WORKERS!—A. M. H.

“How did she manage last season?”
“Oh, her father was alive then! Work-girls did very well if they had a parent’s home to go to, and only their dress and a part of their food to find.” I talked to, and comforted her, and did all I could to strengthen her; and she would stand before me, shake her head, and, while her great brown eyes filled with tears, repeat — “But it’s very hard — it’s very hard!”

“And so it was; but life has its hard lines to rich as well as poor; the season was not over yet; she was anticipating evil.”

“No! she knew what was before her; everybody said the same.”

“And who,” I asked, “was her everybody?”

She flushed, and cast down her eyes, and as she left the room, said, “It was no good talking; she could not see her grandmother starve” — sheltering, poor girl, vice beneath the shadow of virtue. Her “everybody,”

I saw, was some particular ill-adviser. There are always serpents to tempt Eves!

Sarah did not bring the next message. In answer to my inquiry I was told Mrs. Clary had dismissed her four weeks before the end of the season; "they were all very fond of her, but feared she would come to no good. That did not satisfy me. I went to her grandmother's lodging.

The old woman was sitting up, palsied as she had been for years, but cheerful and thankful.

"She had such a good grand-daughter; she lived altogether at Mrs. Clary's now, and gave her such nice things; and that warm shawl — and this — and this." The poor creature believed her doing so well — I could not steep the few remaining days of her life in the bitterness of truth. I left my name on a slip of paper.

The girl came to me that night "in silken sheen," and with tinted cheeks. She tried to brave it out, at first; but I spoke

to her heart and roused her best feelings, and all she did then was to weep and entreat me not to embitter her grandmother's last hours. "The hardest things she had to bear were *her* praise and prayers. She would starve sooner than touch what she gave her, if she knew all; but it was so hard to hear her praise her, and know what she knew of herself: it was *so* hard. She — the old, palsied woman — would curse her if she knew all. She had never thought of *that*, until it was too late — too late! Ah, field-work was better for poor girls, and household service far better, than uncertain work in the midst of London temptations — fine dress, and scant food, and a desire to look as well as others: poverty and hunger on the one side, and a light that shone like pleasure on the other; but if I told her grandmother, she would curse her."

I went to Mrs. Clary. She could do nothing except send me to good true

people who would have saved her, and who had saved scores of her class; and I went freighted with a promise from one noble lady (who knew the temptations they were subject to, and remembered both their weakness and their ignorance) that she would provide for her grandmother if Sarah would come to the shelter and protection she offered. I went with a sobered joy — but still it was thankfulness and joy — to the old woman's lodging, to leave a note for Sarah — but I was too late! Some coarse person had followed the unfortunate girl into the presence of her grandmother, and in that presence reproached her for what she was. Slow to comprehend evil of her darling — the very light of her old eyes — it required stronger words, in louder tones, to destroy her faith in her grandchild; but the accusation was repeated, and facts brought to prove it.

They entered into the old, believing, Christian heart. She would not permit

Sarah to remain in the room; she refused food — and the last act of her life was shredding the clothes Sarah had given her with her trembling fingers, and letting them drop bit by bit on the floor — and so she died!

I never saw the poor girl again — but Mrs. Clary told me she threw herself into the Thames not long after.

Ay, Mary! another page of the old, old story.

The West-end Houses within their closed shutters were all “done up” in brown holland; and if man or woman of decided fashion *were* called to town by business, the strictest *incognito* was preserved, and it would have been an insult to their position to recognise them. Even the street-sweepers had gone to Margate for quiet and change of air.

The public “Charities” and “Missions” subsisted calmly until “next season,” upon the proceeds of their public “dinners” and

“appeals.” Bazaars had not yet harmonised charity and display under the banners of the fairest—and sometimes the vainest—of the daughters of England; and actors and actresses, singers and “singeresses,” who had hardly been heard of in London, were shining as “bright particular stars” among the rural and manufacturing populations of our crowded island. People had gone out of town in stage coaches, or large lumbering carriages, and any one who could have believed in gas or steam, in those far-away days, would have been considered more than slightly insane.

I gathered all my news of the world from Mrs. Clary;—to my landlord the world had no news save that of “the House;” — during the recess he was annihilated—he had no existence when “the House was up.”

Nothing degrades the domestic character of England so completely as permitting the

world to see its interior arrangements ; it is a pity also that people who cater for public amusement will not remember that the public care for the amusement—not for the amuser ; and that if they have a desire connected with the person, it is simply the result of vulgar curiosity. But when a man proves to the world that he has quarrelled with his wife, he falls to the level of the shoemaker or tailor, whose “ Missus had him up ” for ill-treatment. The case may be reversed ; but an ill-treated man is sure to be held in contempt. What fallen angels prompted the establishment of a Divorce Court, to set married people thinking, not what it was they could bear, but what it was they could *not* bear ? I often wonder what the workroom women say about it. At the time of which I now write, their sympathies went with Queen Caroline ! One of the present dresses, my Mary, would be ample for four of the ordinary narrow robes in which that

poor betrayed Queen Caroline received the fag-ends of man and woman-kind, who, from warm hearts, or party spirit, and in defiance of time and weather, crowded to the Receptions of a brave, though ill-judging and evil-intreated, daughter of the House of Brunswick. Mrs. Clary being a "Court dress-maker," could not take her part, and refused to make the "Caroline hat," which generally indicated the political tendency of the fair wearer. I saw her once — that poor, hard-fated Queen! — looking like a full-blown rose that had been crushed under foot, and then picked up and cared for; but its purity and freshness were gone — it was soiled and tattered; arrange it — tend it as you would — its very being a Rose made you turn from it with a painful sensation, seeing what even a rose may come to.

I had still some trimmings on hand; but I was quite prepared for Mrs. Clary's question: "Had I any novelty to propose

for next season ? Painted velvet and chenille had enjoyed a wonderful popularity in the *beau monde*. But what novelty had I in preparation, or even in thought, for next season ? People absolutely spoke of wearing skirts full all round. Odious as it was, such a change was possible, and of course those heavy embroideries could not be worn ; besides, they were *done*. No fashion outlives a season." Mrs. Clary urged me to live with her ; she intended to flatter me by the assurance that I should be useful in the show-room. I had "a Marie Stuart face," she said, "and the Marie Stuart cap and ruff were whispered about—spoken of as 'possible.' My style was good. She had a difficulty in finding a young person for the show-room who moved and spoke like a lady ; a little 'humility' she suggested, blended with my natural dignity, would be very attractive. I could go to my child at night." I was

angry with myself for feeling indignant at what was intended to be complimentary and kind. She proceeded to fix my salary, while I was endeavouring to find words sufficiently tame to express my thanks and my refusal. When a milliner compliments your personal appearance, in the belief that your face is valuable to her bonnets, you may credit her sincerity; and I really think Mrs. Clary believed that her offer, if accepted, would make my fortune. Like the generality of women, her mind turned upon matrimony as on a pivot; they never feel the degradation of such speculations. Every girl, or even widow, with a pretty face or engaging person, is certain to be set down by some benevolently-minded matchmaker as just suited to Mr. A, B, or C, and the meeting is thought of and mentally arranged for with much self-gratification. When I refused, she told me I was very foolish. "She herself married from a show-room!" God help her! Piqued though she was

at my refusal to become an animated lay figure, her good nature overcame her displeasure. "What did I intend to do?"

"Anything!"

"That was very vague. Could I embroider in white?"

"Yes; I should like to give lessons in the morning and embroider at night. I could teach English, Italian, and velvet-painting."

"Would I take a village school? One of 'her ladies' had been inquiring for a young person capable of instructing in a school she had established on her own estate for the children of her tenants and dependants — a charming lady — one of her best customers — worth three hundred a year to her at least. A widow she believed — at least she never heard of a husband, though of course one might be still alive — it was hard to say — gentlemen seldom came to show-rooms except with their brides. Such taste she had!"

I was sorely perplexed — how could

I go to the country? I lived on in the hope of seeing HIM next session; of hearing HIM. Surely, I could find means of subsistence in this mighty London, even during the dead season. I had saved—oh yes! I had saved more than double what I had expended; but I must reserve and add to that for my child's sake. All this flew rapidly, as thoughts will fly, through the brain. I told Mrs. Clary I preferred remaining in London. She opened still more widely her great round eyes, and told me truly that I knew nothing of the slackness of employment in the out-of-season time. It was a pity, if I had any idea of teaching, I did not think of the school. It was quite a "fancy school," and only one lady to please—not as if I had, she said smilingly, a feminine board-of-green-cloth to deal with—and it was near town.

"How near?"

"Somewhere between Richmond and

Twickenham — seven or eight miles. She would give me some of her embroideries to do there if I liked — if I had leisure.”

That altered the case. Only seven or eight miles! Better air for my child, and the power of visiting town when I pleased.

I thanked Mrs. Clary, and said I would consider about it.

She replied, “there was little time to consider. Mrs. Stanley never waited for anything, or any one; if she did not find a school teacher at once she would make one.”

“*Make* a teacher?”

“Oh, that was nothing to Mrs. Stanley. She *was* so clever, she would make a teacher out of her own maid or one of the tenants’ daughters. Make them rehearse at night what they had to do in the morning, provided they had voices — if I had a good voice I must succeed; indeed, Mrs. Clary almost feared, as she had seen Mrs. Stanley yesterday morning, that by this time the

situation was filled. The lady was so fond of that school—she was such a philanthropist—it was her pet hobby—no harm.” Mrs. Clary suggested if I took the coach at the White Horse Cellar I could be there soon after two. She was a kind creature, good Mrs. Clary. All the fashions in the world—not even her desire to possess a new trimming—could interfere with her doing a friendly action. She made me take a cup of French chocolate, and offered me her purse. “I might not,” she said, “have brought mine with me.” And then she put on me a Marie Stuart cap, composed of pink and white silver-paper, and sighed at my want of taste in preferring the duties of a village school to being clothed in purple and fine linen in her show-room.

CHAPTER VI.

NEITHER heart nor eye could desire aught more lovely than the situation and arrangement of "The Lawn," as Mrs. Stanley's residence was called, in the "Vale of the Thames;" the house stood considerably above the level of the "royal stream," the lawn descending in gentle slope to meet the water. The entrance-gates were protected by two Lodges, embowered by every variety of "creeper"; the drive was so closed in by evergreens, that it was not until you had turned an angle the dwelling and its "setting" shone before you. The house had evidently been added to from time to time, and was made up of turrets and gables, and an old belfry, and lancet-shaped windows, and a delicious conservatory, ter-

minated by a projecting music-room with a bow window, that took in a most beautiful "reach" of the river. The buildings, so dissimilar yet so combined, might have looked incongruous if they had not been so overgrown by luxurious climbing plants.

The lady paramount of this lovely scene of lawn, and trees, and river, of which Richmond Hill formed the foliated background, was one of those fantastic specimens of philanthropy which it is far more easy to imagine than describe. She was enthusiastic in all things, practical in nothing — she wished the children (girls) to enter school to the sound of sweet music, as she said, to "harmonise their feelings," and instead of sitting at my desk to receive them, I was to sing, as, having been first placed rank and file in the outward porch by a monitor, they entered two and two, filing off, poor little things, to their appointed places. The lady was about your size, my Mary, delicately formed, and with



that natural turn for affectation — or what is considered so — that belongs to a weak but highly sensitive organisation. It was not difficult to see that her whims were stronger than her reason. I often thought, afterwards, that I could have better borne with a capricious nature than endured the obstinacy with which she adhered to whatever she fixed upon as right. She would have made a pretty picture in that gorgeously littered room, bending over her harp, and now and then striking a chord to accompany the moaning sort of chant with which she desired to *harmonise* the feelings of my future pupils as they entered school. Her voice was peculiarly low and sweet — the whisper of an ordinary voice. Looking up literally through the masses of shiny yellow hair, which had fallen over her cheeks and brow, she asked if I could manage so much music as that? There was nothing to manage. I endeavoured to keep down my voice; but it would fill the

room, and my patroness started up with an exclamation expressive of delight and astonishment—"Such a voice! Where did it come from? Where had it been cultivated?" In her delight at my voice and its training, she for a moment forgot her school; but as her plan was to educate the world by the influence of sweet sounds, she quickly returned to her object, and became more than usually eloquent in her explanations. Of course it was my duty, if I accepted the situation she offered, to receive her instructions, though I did not comprehend the advantage of tripping over the alphabet to dance music, or chanting the responses to the Church Catechism; but there is something so inexpressibly sweet in the sound of young voices, either in speaking or singing, that I rather liked the idea of such employment. When I found she was preparing to question me on my former life, I volunteered to inform her that, if she took me at all, she must take

me on trust—that I could not answer questions, but would solemnly assure her that I was an honest, honourable, married woman, fully capable of undertaking all she required.

She believed me; and after a little time I was engaged to superintend her school, on musical principles, at a salary of forty pounds a year, including residence. And such a bird's nest of a residence it was! Two rooms at the end of the school, and the entire of the loft over the whole—such a play-room for my boy! Had the school been in course of construction now, she would have inclined to the Gothic, and the school-room would doubtless have been properly constructed to the glorification of the architect, and the exclusion of light and air—its cheerful sunny aspect rendered gloomy and austere by narrow windows and painted glass. As it was, the room, if not lofty, was very long; and as windows to open and shut were at both sides, the

ventilation was excellent. The outer walls were covered by those luxuriant climbers that flourish to perfection in the Vale of the Thames—roses and woodbines dared to press against the casements, and every variety of clematis and Virginia creeper flung their web-like tendrils across the panes. A square piano occupied the place of honour usually appropriated to the teacher's desk, at the top of the school-room, while the desk sulked in the nearest corner. I endeavoured to steal bits of utility into this "system," and even favoured those who had "no ear," without which Mrs. Stanley believed they had better never have been born. How she delighted to see them enter to "slow music," and then take their places while singing the Morning Hymn! Then came the musical alphabet for the little ones, and harmonised spelling and arithmetic for the elders; the samplers got on under the influence of "In my Cottage near a Wood," and back-

stitch progressed to a bit out of "Tancredi," and all the time Mrs. Stanley believed she was training up those girls to become good cottagers' wives and excellent domestic servants. Do not laugh so contemptuously at this, my dear Mary. There are many philanthropists in this our present day who are just as visionary in their plans and systems of "amelioration" and "education" as was Mrs. Stanley. I do not think that *crochet* fits a girl a bit more to be a husbandman's wife, or a good "family" cook, than singing in tune. The culture of our girls, high and low, despite their classes and colleges, their medals and scholarships, is deplorably wanting in the element that fits woman for her *duties*—for the thinking and calculating business of domestic existence— for the looking forward as well as upward that renders her so valuable for the worldly as well as the spiritual progress of life—ay, deplorably wanting in any distinct knowledge of that "self-help" which,

when necessary, can be resorted to by women of all classes, to lighten their own wayside burdens, and help them to bear the burdens of those far dearer to them than life itself.

It seems to me that we have been for some time astray on educational matters. The Mechanics' Institutes throughout the country, that were to "intellectualise" and protect our young men from evil company, are everywhere in a state of bankruptcy, and our national education is tacitly acknowledged to be so ineffective, that I have lately heard wise men debating whether we might not venture on the Prussian system, and coerce the people to educate their children. But this has to do with England's *future*, not with my past; and I will not now weary you, dear Mary, on a theme concerning which I could write a volume.

For some little time I enjoyed more tranquillity in my bower of youth and roses than I had dared to hope for or antici-

pate. I was so netted around by life, it was such a change from the monotony of my needle, which always gave me time for thought, that a healthier current flowed through my veins, though my skeleton, clothed as it was in its almost divine beauty, was ever with me ; yet the blessed influence that childhood exercises over us, harmonised me, while I was directed in my duty to harmonise others. Mrs. Stanley, fortunately, had resolved not to "show off" her pupils until they had attained a degree of excellence that would at once overthrow the Rector's opposition to the lady's "system." He had refused to let them sing in church, because of its "vain display." I forgot to tell you that there *was* a Mr. Stanley, though few people seemed to take into consideration the fact of his existence ; he looked after the children—four—who, being wholly "without ear," were their mother's great and terrible affliction. She never mentioned

them without sighs and tears, and wondered how they could be *her* children. Well, their father looked after them with all a mother's tenderness, and rolled the lawn after summer showers. I heard he was very scientific, and he always looked kind and gentle — a long, lean man. I never saw him in the school but once, when he brought my little boy in on his shoulder, and very gravely inquired if I intended such a boy as that for a fiddler? Once Mrs. Stanley invited some friends from London, and sent for me to sing to them. I refused;— she was very angry. I told her I was the mistress of her school, not a concert-singer, and that if I failed to give her satisfaction I would leave, but I would not be made a show of.

She hinted I was not what I seemed. I replied, I had never said I was, and stood holding my little boy's hand, expecting my dismissal; but she left my room without another word.

During the next session I went up to town more than once, though but once I heard Sir Oswald address a public meeting. While men shouted and tossed their hats in the air, and women alternately wept and shook their handkerchiefs, I gathered myself together in a dark corner and trembled. I could neither weep nor cry out. There was a great rush, as usual, to see *him* get into his carriage, but it had driven off before I could descend the steps. SHE seemed to have passed out of the public mind — simply, I suppose, because she was not constantly doing something to excite attention. But I heard a rumour which, for a time, made me so ill that I was some days without being able to attend to my duties, and I shrank from my child's caresses. If *that* was true, I *must* stand forth, and destroy, with my own breath, the air-castle I had erected. My child's eyes seemed to follow me reproachfully. There were moments when I could not look

at him. I devoured a small portion of the *Morning Post* daily. At last I saw it—

“ On Thursday, at Brecken Hall, the residence of Sir Oswald Harvey, Lady Harvey, of a daughter, *still born.*”

.
I suppose I had always an instinctive habit of observation. I never tried to observe, but I saw things and read characters quickly; and after all, life in a village is only the miniature life of a city. No doubt I excited a good deal of curiosity; and Mrs. Stanley, who delighted in mystery, fostered it. My boy was the plaything and delight of the school, but, with the exception of music, received other impressions slowly. He inherited his father's impetuous nature, and was impatient of control. His memory was, however, strongly retentive; and he evidently pondered over, to retain, much of what he saw and heard. He had an innate boldness as if conscious of his birth-right, mingled with a sort of suppressed

pride, as if he knew by instinct that he was subjected to a wrong. You may comprehend my feelings when continually noting these phases in his gradually-developing character. Sometimes I felt almost forced into a belief that my secret was known to him ; and then, what intense agony I endured ! All my devotion to him, to strengthen his mind and mature his natural powers, seemed but a poor compensation for the gifts and rights of which I had deprived him.

Even then, dear Mary, I was perpetually asking myself the question — “ *Can* wrong be right ? ” And the answer of heart, mind, and conscience was ever the same — “ Never ! ”

Mrs. Stanley, foiled in her desire to exhibit my voice, delighted in showing off the “ infant Mozart,” as she would call him, to her friends. Even while the keys of the piano were almost beyond the reach of his little fingers, he would play any music that

was sung to him, or that he had heard, picking out the notes with one finger, and as he grew older, finding out harmonies, he would strike a chord, and look up with eyes humid with delight; if he unfortunately sounded a discord, it would send a positive shudder through his little frame. I endeavoured to restrain this music mania, but in vain; the passion was as the pulse of his existence. Mr. Stanley's observation that "it would be a pity to make such a boy as that a fiddler," often struck upon my heart; and instead of receiving as a great boon the gift of the only *earthly* enjoyment we are taught to expect in Heaven — even with the memory of how his father delighted in noble music — I often and often bore him from the piano, and left him sobbing on his little bed. My boy darling! — he was gaining more and more space in my heart — another idol — smaller and weaker than the first, but still an idol — the two were growing into one. During

his infancy, now in his early childhood, I was all to him, but the time was fast coming when his education and his temper would require a father's care and control. I still laboured nightly to acquire what *tutors* only are believed to be capable of teaching — but what of that?

Mrs. Stanley's neighbours were certainly not harmonised towards her school; the Rector called her "system" a mass of absurdity and display. Such children as were not directly under Mrs. Stanley's influence were withdrawn. The blacksmith's wife, a stout, strong-minded woman, who, in her husband's absence, could shoe a horse, and declared she could swing a hammer "as well as any *he* in England," had the daring to set her opinion up against "Madam Stanley," and called the pretty school the "Squalling College." Of course, Mrs. Stanley sent her horses to be shod at Kingston — and this made matters worse. The blacksmith and his wife both retorted

that they only repeated "what Parson said." But this breach had the one good effect of making them go to church twice every Sunday — they resolved to "stand by Parson," and Mrs. Stanley determined to support her system while a girl remained in the school. Three maiden ladies of good fortune were believed to have a great deal of local influence, and Mrs. Stanley relied very much upon their attachment to her in this divided matter. They resided at a lovely place named "The Willows," and the small satire of the village called the sisters "the Three Willows." I thought of them as the Misses Flexible, belonging to that undulating class of women who agree with everything and everybody; who, without intending to be false, have never the self-reliance or the moral courage to be true. They were all afflicted with different degrees of by no means an uncommon weakness — *love of approbation* — which, of all our moral weaknesses, most surely un-

dermines all dignity and singleness of purpose—all simplicity and purity of character. They praised everything, because they wanted everything to praise them. There was nothing ever done that they had not thought of doing. They trumpeted each other's sayings and charities, and were too well satisfied with themselves to be dissatisfied with anything. They were always insinuating how they had helped *this* person, and pushed on the other — they were three gigantic I's. Miss Bess and Miss Maud, and simpering Miss Fanny, were, in fact, one and the same: they would rather hear the clap-hand of a fool than the kindest reproof that could fall from the lips of a friend. Mrs. Stanley was the reverse of all this. Now-a-days (if being lovely and graceful did not incapacitate) she might have held the brevet-rank of a "strong-minded woman." I could hardly understand how she endured their personal pronouns and their insincerity. They were

a trio of weathercocks, and yet resentful of any slight to their imaginary superiority. They received compliments as Cæsar did his tribute-money, and with as little gratitude. They would come into the schoolroom with a toe-tripping gait, and tell me how they had given this and that away, and done this or the other good action. Such persons have no conception of doing right for the sake of right — no care for the glory of doing good “that grace may abound” — no idea of the honour of being silent labourers in their Lord’s vineyard — no standard, indeed, but their pitiful, sapless selves. Beware, my Mary, of those who, phrenologists say, have “large love of approbation.” Their good deeds are all illegitimate children, who can have no sound heritage among us. I could not bear them; whenever they visited the school, they nodded their three heads in time to the music, and murmured “bravo,” “sweet,” “delicious,” “charming,” in every soft

variety of tone. They always, in a sort of friendly trio, called Mrs. Stanley "Harmony;" assured her she was "a tender blessing," and elated her exceedingly by taking her best "*mezzo soprano*" from the school, as under-housemaid. How Mrs. Stanley, for ten whole days, did exult over that removal! She told it to every one, she wrote about it to every one — such a proof of the excellence of "her system!" But, alas! the re-action came. Esther was altogether deficient in housemaid requirements — as I knew she would be. She could take the second in the multiplication-table to perfection, but she could not cast up a washing-bill; and then, she "had such a passion for slut holes." She sang "Dulce Domum," the song of the season, like an angel, yet she was ever running out "on the sly," to the daughter of the *public-house*, who had been Mrs. Stanley's favourite "*contralto*," until she found her father exacted pennies for her singing. Poor child.

she was a painful proof of the mistake of attempting to cultivate a plant in a wrong soil. I told Mrs. Stanley she was a miserable needlewoman; and Mrs. Stanley said, in reply, "she would be sure to improve — she had an inquiring mind." She gave a sad proof of this, by inserting a knife into a Spanish guitar, a great favourite at "The Willows," to see what was in its inside! The Willows, after this failure, were absolutely seen by Mrs. Stanley at the gate of the Rectory, leaving cards. It is true they nodded their heads more than ever the next time they came to see us; but the spell was broken. My little Mistress was cold, and stiff, and stately; she could throw a great deal of dignity around her little person when she pleased, and she was at all events perfectly sincere. That was their last visit. The sisters went completely over to the opposite party.

The clergyman made overtures of amalgamation, which greatly excited the indig-

nation of the blacksmith's wife, who charged him with it, arms a kimbo, as he passed the forge. He was an honest, good Christian, and spoke words of peace that hissed upon her hot-iron nature like drops of water on a glowing anvil. She had got over the tax-gatherer, the two haberdashers—(Mrs. Stanley purchased all her "soft goods" in London or Windsor, even to the school pin-befores)—and the baker; and she threatened the clergyman with her "faction," or with turning Methodist. "More strange things might come to pass than 'the people's' setting up a school for their own children, far and away from Squires or Parsons. She meant neither wrong nor rudeness; but Salem Chapel wasn't far off, and many talked of the preacher's 'gifts.'"

We had, of course, one or two energetic neighbours, who, rather than fall into a calm, would propose anything or oppose anything. We had our enterprising spirits; and one glorious woman, a Mrs. Dunbar, a

ruined gentlewoman as far as money was concerned, but the crowning blessing of the parish — always found beside the sickest bed and by the poorest hearth, fearing no moral or bodily pestilence — wearing no cap or hooded badge to tell the world of her self-sacrifice — neatly and carefully dressed according to her means — looking as if patience was her joy, and sick-nursing her delight — a brave, true woman, ever ready to serve and wait, making her way on earth the way to heaven ! I owe that dear woman's memory a churchfull of monuments ! This good lady was an unswerving tower of strength to our poor cottagers, some of whom were cold, careless, and ignorant ; others anxious, patient, and prayerful ; the poor helping the poor, and the *godly* striving earnestly, but not always wisely, to make others think in all things exactly as they did, and sometimes stumbling over straws, as if they were serious impediments to salvation.

My employer, as you know, considered music the great educator. Her husband gave the same place to mineralogy. His brother, Mr. Ferdinand Stanley, was a singular contrast to Mr. Stanley of the Lawn. In his straw hat, white waistcoat, and nankeen jacket and trousers — (his favourite morning costume) — he would, with the assistance of a pipe and tabor, have been the very model of an Arcadian shepherd. He was such a mild-eyed, pink-faced, innocent-looking man ; so small and agile, floating here and flitting there, standing on one leg and pirouetting, to the great indignation of his scientific brother, and the ill-concealed contempt of his sister-in-law. And yet he had an educational theory of his own. Dancing, he contended, in a thin, lisping voice, ought to be made the basis of education. Harmony of motion would, sooner or later, regenerate our social system — children should be taught to dance before they could walk. Nothing like danc-

ing to reform the lower classes of society ; instead of meeting to drink, old and young should assemble round the Maypole, and our rural districts become positive Arcadias : there would then be an end to every species of vicious dissipation. If his system were adopted (as in time, when the world became more rational, he had no doubt it must be), babies would come dancing into the world, and old age go dancing out of it ! He was very innocent and very harmless, and greatly in favour with all the young children of my school, whom he used to teach to dance, rewarding them with gilt gingerbread husbands and wives, which were the *bon-bons* of those days. But, as the villagers said, Mr. Ferdinand "took a turn," and determined to go as a missionary to some benighted island, and we saw him no more.

It is not to be disputed that, in the country, people ride their hobbies more furiously than they do in large cities ; they get into

the way of attaching great importance to small things — and it may be well when they do so, for anything is preferable to stagnation. Mrs. Stanley still decided to keep to “her system” as long as a child remained in the school, and her kindness to me never wavered. She commanded herself, rather than give me pain.

Another winter had come, and had nearly gone, when two of my little pupils came to school weary and heavy-eyed, and with so much fever about them that I took them home myself. Their mothers thought it was measles. I did not fear the measles for my boy; with his fine constitution the measles could not harm him. Another child, the same day, when day was concealing its fading glories under the shadows of evening, became ill — worse than the others. She was a brave little thing, and declared she was not so bad but that she could “do” her work. As I was leading her towards her home, I met the village Doctor — and he,

too, like my never-to-be-forgotten friend Dr. Ridge, was a man you felt at once was your good friend. Of course, he looked at her tongue, felt her pulse, and then opening her eyelids, examining her eyes. He took hold of her other hand, and so the child walked between us.

“It is measles, Doctor,” I said, confidently.

“Is it?” was his reply. My heart began to beat rapidly.

“Surely it is not scarlatina?”

“I think not.”

“Then what is it, Doctor?”

“I shall be able to tell you to-morrow. Two others you say attacked in the same way? They must all be put to bed and kept warm. I will myself go to the cottages. Poor little dears!”

He changed the subject; spoke of other matters; then asked after my boy; talked of various things again; then said he had taken some fine vaccine matter that morn-

ing, and if I liked he would vaccinate his young friend—or *me*.

Then I knew the children had neither measles nor scarlatina. In positive terror I dropped the little creature's hand, and fixed my eyes upon the Doctor's face. He understood my question, though I could not give it voice.

"I fear it is so," he said; "it is raging at Richmond and Kingston, and may cross the river. But, as your boy has been vaccinated, if he does catch it, it will be very slight indeed—and it could do *you* no harm either to have vaccination repeated; there can be no danger; remember, the sure way to catch an infection is to fear it."

We were both vaccinated that night; but the next morning we both, my child and I, gave evidence that we had caught the small-pox.

CHAPTER VII.

It is impossible to create an interest in the progress of a disease such as that which had afflicted us ; it is simply loathsome and dangerous. As long as my reason remained, my anxiety was for my child. The benevolent lady, Mrs. Dunbar, whom I mentioned to you, was, as a ministering angel, by my side night and day ; and I know that to her care and watching I owe my life. Immediately before my mind gave way, I was impressed with an idea that I was dying, and saw clearly, that, in the event of my death, all record of who my child really was would be obliterated. I could not see what I wrote—yet I did write a few words that explained all, directed them to my husband, and enclosed

them in half a sheet of paper, which Mrs. Dunbar sealed, promising not to open it except in the event of my death—and then only to have it safely delivered as addressed. After this came a long insensibility to all around me : my first consciousness was hearing my child singing some air in his usual “ta-ta” way. I listened with sealed eyes—but I could not be deceived ; the voice had the ringing music of health in its tones.

I did, indeed, thank God that he was well, and that I was spared ; but I had quite enough of the woman in me to feel anxious about my appearance. “The small-pox” had been the terror of my life. When assured by Mrs. Dunbar that my boy was safe, that he had had the disease favourably, was not in the least “marked,” and that his eyes were clear as ever, I asked a leading question as to my own future. I was told to be thankful ; my life, and, she now hoped, my eye-sight were safe. All this was great cause of gratitude.

The disease had, indeed, poured out the vial of its wrath on my devoted head. When able to see, my self-constituted nurse refused me the looking-glass I craved for—she knew I could not bear it yet. When I did seek myself on its bright surface, the once Mildred Kennett could nowhere be discovered. The enlarged spotted features!—But, enough. You know I bear the marks on my cheeks and brow to this day; imagine what it was when I could in no way recognise myself—imagine what it was when my child screamed, and lisped that was “not mamma!” and you will comprehend the agony I endured. Not only was my beauty gone, but I had lost every trace of my identity.

Until then I had believed myself free from personal vanity. Even before my grandmother was recommended by the imperious Lady Harvey to “sear my face with a red hot iron,” I knew that I was considered a village beauty. I believed

it when a girl. My grandmother, wisely, had never made fuss or concealment about it. It was a fact, as much so as the beauty of a tree—the warmth of sunshine. It pleased people to look at me—I saw it in their faces, and was glad! There had been times when even Sir Oswald recognised it with approval; and at Rome, where it had been the poet's and painter's theme, I saw it gave him pleasure. I could not tell to what future I looked forward; but beauty is a woman's stronghold during the earlier portion of her life, and she struggles hard and it may be foolishly, to keep it.

Much, it is true, of what is wasted in her battle with Time would secure to her, if properly employed, a firmer hold on the affections of the man she loves—whose objects will change quite as much as her beauty; the lover merges insensibly into the husband, who requires a different sort of companionship to keep what has been won. Then come the father's anxieties for his

children, calling forth a new existence in the woman; and the dear word "Mother" is added to the earlier but not more cherished ones of bride and wife. A woman may honestly seek to preserve her beauty while discharging her duties; but she must not hope the husband values it as he did, though he may estimate her better and more.

My child for some time would not go near me, but screamed violently if I attempted to touch him. At last I began singing one of his favourite airs. He drew closer and closer—put up his little hands to stroke my face, passing them gently over the scarlet ridges—murmured "Poor mamma — not pretty mamma — poor mamma," and held up his blooming mouth to kiss my still swollen lips.

Oh, my woman's vanity! What anguish it was to feel that HE could never remember me as I was. "Poor mamma—NOT pretty —poor mamma!"

The conviction that charm after charm is passing is a greater trial to a fading woman than she may admit; but the effect, if sure, is slow; and as the once Beauty passes carefully over Time's stepping-stones, she derives consolation from the knowledge that there are those pressing onward like herself, to whom she is very dear, and others who ward off the approach of age, as an enemy, from her, lest they should be robbed of a cherished treasure; and so she gets on between hopes and fears, until fairly shrouded by old age. Of course this is only a source of very partial regret to high-souled noble women, who progress, with triumphal march, through the present to the New Kingdom, and have had a lofty end in view from their earlier days. But I lost suddenly by this frightful attack what, in the ordinary course of time, it would have taken many years to destroy.

Mrs. Stanley declared she was beaten from her plans by the small pox — not by

any failure of her "system." She could not ask parents to send their children to her school, "the nest of such an infection," for months to come. "She was so grieved — so sorry." I saw that she could not bear to look at me, but spoke with averted eyes. She had given Mr. Stanley notice that he was to go abroad with her for a few months; he was very useful, she said, in seeing after the children. "If Mr. Stanley did not go, she must take a second governess."

I found I must seek another home. The school was to be metamorphosed into an aviary for acclimatising foreign singing-birds, which, after a time, were to be turned into the plantations, and give our English songsters some fresh ideas of sound. Mrs. Dunbar offered me a home in her cottage. "I could work there," she said; "and no doubt, when the season came round, I should find my friend the milliner ready to supply me with data to work from; I was then unequal to any exertion." I can

hardly tell why, but I was haunted by a dread that during my delirium I had betrayed at least a portion of my history to Mrs. Dunbar. Her nature was so conscientious, that, at almost any peril, those whom she knew to be going wrong she *must* endeavour to set right; and every now and then she threw out little hints that the means should sanctify the end, and that it was an anti-Christian fallacy to talk of the end sanctifying the means. She loved to say—"We must not do ill that grace may abound." She did not like my boy to play with the village children. I sometimes perceived her eyes fixed on me with an expression of such mingled pity and anxiety, that I longed to question her, and yet dared not. The doctor had still forbidden me to sit in unshaded light, or to use my eyes at all—he considered my life preserved as by a miracle, as some species of fever succeeded the fever of the disease that

had ploughed my poor face with its iron coulter.

The Stanleys were gone ; but to the last Mrs. Stanley treated me with consideration, and assured me she hoped to re-establish her system on her return. The smith's wife and her adherents quietly continued their children as pupils at the parish school, and nothing more was said about the chapel.

My good friend's activity could find no safety-valve beyond visiting the regular cottage invalids—as the small pox, having exhausted its rage, left the village healthy and tranquil. My boy's enjoyment was music—he would sit for hours at the piano in the now deserted schoolroom, no matter how cold it was, and resist removal. This had grown on me, and I could not understand why Mrs. Dunbar was anxious on the subject—such a superb, healthy little fellow, as he was ! But it was his extreme wilfulness, I soon discovered, that caused

my friend so much trouble—he was such a determined boy that I could not manage him.

I remember confessing to that good woman how completely the child mastered the woman. “You gave him his own way in infancy,” said my friend, “as many mothers do, in the vain belief that the baby is too young to comprehend his power. This is a popular fallacy. The infant’s eye soon distinguishes between jest and earnest! his will now is stronger than yours; yours is strong in patience, in perseverance; in love, certainly—in duty perhaps; but his is strong for CONQUEST. He is exactly the boy who requires a father—under your management he will be ruined.”

You can imagine how I writhed under these truths, and knelt helplessly beside him while he slept, praying his pardon for the injury I had done him, and entreating

God, in his mercy, to find some way of escape for us both.

My spirit was still very unchastened. I was impatient of this forced life of inactivity. Even when the doctor said it was time that I took exercise, I shrouded my face beneath a double veil of crape, that no breath of air could penetrate without bearing that peculiar aroma of blackness which those who wear crape know so well. I had no means of obtaining intelligence of Sir Oswald's movements. How could I go to Mrs. Clary, or see any one? This thought recurring so often, drove me more than half distracted. I wept and wept, like a foolish woman as I was. I imagined a thousand phantoms, each of them worse than the realities of my convent life. I believe that at times I was almost unkind to my child, and in my wickedness faulted Mrs. Dunbar's lovingness towards him, feeling as if her sweet, gentle face took away his affection from me — while I

believed he still turned from me in disgust. I resolved as it were to shut out all hope. Mrs. Dunbar's patience irritated me more and more: only a God-taught woman could endure as she did. One night my thoughts had been seething through my brain more painfully than ever—sleep was impossible; at last I wrapped myself in my shawl, and, deserting my bed, sat pressing my fevered brow against the glass of the window, when, suddenly, a light seemed to shine into my whole nature! I fell on my knees in the sunshine of a hope, so bright, that I felt my heart beat tumultuously, and a prayer of gratitude poured from my lips. How was it that I had never thought this thought before? Such healing as it brought on its wings, soothing and comforting me beyond conception! I longed for daylight; yet lay down calmly and gratefully, and slept soundly until the day was far advanced.

I awoke a different creature. My child

was already up and dressed, and I had never heard him move: the little fellow was breakfasting when I entered the parlour. I had always chosen the darkest corner of the room to sit in; now I boldly faced the light and my hostess—kissed my child cheerfully, so that, placing his little arms round my neck, he drew down my head to be kissed again. And when breakfast was over, Mrs. Dunbar had folded her hands in the silent thankfulness that was her habit. Looking at her steadily, I said—

“I know you to be entirely incapable of dissimulation; look at me, and tell me truly if, in what I am, you could in any way recognise what I was? Tell me!”

“I really wish you would not ask a question which it would give me much pain to answer. In the course of a few months, perhaps,—”

“No; I do not yet want to hear what may happen with time,” I replied; “I want from my good and faithful friend—my

gentle and kind nurse—a direct answer. Could you recognise in what I am, what I was?”

“No, I certainly could not; but ——”

“Is it possible that I shall ever be like my former self?”

“I fear not; the redness will, of course, fade, and those seams soften: your eyes are really unchanged.”

“Except in the setting, my friend: the long lashes are gone.”

“They are returning; and your smile—for this is the first time I have seen you smile since your illness—is, as it has——” She paused, and then added—“May God give you strength to bear the truth, my poor friend! but were those nearest and dearest to you in the world, who had not seen you for six months, to meet you now, they certainly would not know you.”

She was quite unprepared for the emotion—certainly not one of sorrow, with which I cast myself on her bosom,

and ejaculated, "Thank God!" again and again.

She held me from her after a few minutes, and then said —

"The time may come when you will tell me what this means. I do not now ask you to do so ; it is the duty of a friend to respect silence, and I can have faith, without the aid of words, in your honour." She kissed my poor, seamed brow, as if it had been clear as alabaster, and on my knees I blessed her for the noble reliance she placed in me.

The iron shaft was drawn from my heart, and the wound healed ; a new path was laid out for me, and a new door opened. I could meet my husband face to face, and he would not know me ! I could be near him without fear of detection : I might even minister to him, — who could tell ? My appearance could excite no emotion in HER jealous mind. Where they went, I could follow ! My boy might

attract HIS attention. Who could look on him without admiration! my glorious, beautiful boy! How thankful I was that he had escaped the brand of the destroyer — how grateful, that my face had been masked so effectually! I might return to my native village — might weep beside my father's grave, and invoke the spirit-blessing of my dear grandmother in her own chamber — might wander in the woods of Brecken! — might kneel within the church where my husband worshipped, unknown, unrecognised, uncared for, except as a stranger! Oh, blessed mask! How I rejoiced in the concealment thus promised to me!

CHAPTER VIII.

HAD I acted in accordance with my desires, I would have left my child under Mrs. Dunbar's care, and at once found my way to Brecken. No regret for my lost beauty mingled with the delightful sensation of liberty that bounded through my veins in rapid currents, and beat in every pulse; it was such a new feeling, that I was altogether a different creature. Mrs. Dunbar smiled quietly, as if she thought what a powerful motive must exist to make a young woman rejoice in the total wreck of her good looks—but I smiled, in return, “No one could recognise me.” It was only sometimes, when I looked in the glass, that a throb of womanly anguish amounted

for the moment to suffocation ; but it quickly passed away, when I whispered to myself that such was the price of my freedom. As yet, however, I must not venture out of the neighbourhood — my scars were still so recent that people would fear infection ; but I was freed from restraint. I walked out fearlessly. I did not tremble at the roll of carriage-wheels, nor shrink from meeting the wayside stranger. I should not be recognised anywhere — I could look in the face of him for whom I had sacrificed everything, and he “ would not know me.”


My hands were too valuable for Mrs. Clary to leave them long unemployed, and when able to receive it, I had no lack of work. She came down herself with some mysterious matters of great importance, and mourned over my “state” most pathetically. I asked her if she still wished me to take the position she had offered me in her show-room, and was greatly amused at her

look of horror. Then she said, "It was my own fault I had not at once accepted the situation—I should then have escaped infection, and who knows what might have happened?" That dim prying into the future, and drawing conclusions from its indistinctness, was one of poor Mrs. Clary's great consolations — that "who knows what may happen?" the wind-up of comfort to many of her disappointments. She went through all the fashionable news with much gusto — it was, she said, "on the verge of the season, and there were rumours of long waists and full skirts — it was difficult to say what would happen." Then, gazing at me with a sorrowful expression, she exclaimed, "But you have still your figure! You have still your figure! Take care of that — such a figure for the Esterhazy pelisse! But still it would not do—you could not always keep your face to the wall. You must use goulard water and milk of roses,



and not be down-hearted." I told her I was not down-hearted — I felt it was all for the best. I assured her I was much happier than I had been for a long time; and then I drew her to speak of her customers — no difficult matter. She went over the "beauties" of the past season, and spoke of those who were "coming out." Among those of the past she mentioned Lady Harvey, bridling herself up in a peculiar way when she did so. "Oh yes, certainly, Sir Oswald was a remarkable man — a great political luminary; but could not last long the way he was going on, burning the candle at both ends — writing all night, when the House was up, instead of resting. Must have great confidence in his Lady, as she went out a good deal without him. It was hard upon a pretty woman when her husband would sit among his musty papers, and cease to care whether she stayed in or went out. Yes, Lady Harvey kept her

ground wonderfully well, though the baby came in the way; and Sir Oswald was mightily disappointed that it was dead — he did so long for a child! But, if she must speak the truth — which she did, of course, confidentially to a friend — yes, in the strictest confidence — she thought Lady Harvey was not sorry to be rid of the baby altogether; for her maid, a sharp Frenchwoman, who had been with her when she was Miss Mansfeld (and I, too, remembered the woman well — ay, well), knew, she said, that of a certainty the baby would have led to words, for Sir Oswald wished her Lady to nurse it, and of course no lady could submit to that, particularly such a lady as Lady Harvey, who had been accustomed to the greatest admiration, and would have her own way. Now,” continued Mrs. Clary “there is one thing I do not like in that maid — I do not like her morality; she has no feeling of right, and I am sorry she is where she is. She repeated over and over again that her Lady must



have admiration and devotion, and could not live without it, while she did not seem to care where it came from. And Sir Oswald had become too patriotic, too eloquent, too much occupied by business, to devote himself to her Ladyship, as he was in duty bound to do. She had the audacity to say she hoped her Lady would find admirers elsewhere; and she for one would not say 'wrong she did.' Lady Harvey could have every man of fashion in London at her feet, if she pleased — she had such a taking way with her! No lady had more right to devotion than her Lady. She might be a little capricious, she did not deny it, and him she cared for seemingly to-day, she would not care for to-morrow — that was her way, and that proved there was no harm in it; not a bit! She certainly had been madly in love with Sir Oswald once, there was no doubt about it; but he could not expect that to last, unless he gave up everything for her." Then

Mrs. Clary rushed into a tirade against lady's-maids in general, and that lady's-maid in particular — then burst into raptures about a new customer, a Spanish beauty, with white camelias in her hair — and such little feet! I was too bewildered to return quickly to the one subject of my life — a terrible chill crept through me. Could it be possible, after all, that Sir Oswald was not happy? Had I sacrificed, not *one*, but two?

In the course of an hour I inquired if Lady Harvey liked her trimming? "Wore it once at the Drawing-room—hardly ever wears anything twice. Those capricious ladies are excellent customers, though it requires rare patience to put up with them." Then, after meditating, she added, "No, we must have no more velvet and chenille for years to come!—the fashion is over." Poor Mrs. Clary! she was very kind to me, and really anxious for my well-doing; but I felt relieved when she was

gone. I wanted to be alone with my thoughts. It seemed that I should have no reprieve; no sooner was one anxiety relieved than another sprang into its place. The "Wrong" never came "Right." Yet, after all, the loose and abominable chatter of a woman of narrow and impure mind was no *proof* against her mistress. She might desire to give her only the celebrity she could comprehend; because married ladies abroad encouraged troops of adorers, and the husband received them as his friends, she, perhaps, only desired to show off her foreign breeding to Mrs. Clary, and enjoy her indignation. She was malicious—one of those creatures who delight to give pain; and to depreciate such an English gentleman as Sir Oswald would be a triumph. She was a thing made up of tinsel, and frippery, and impertinence—a coarse-minded, vicious woman, as false as she was cunning. I lashed myself into a rage against her, of which she was un-

worthy, and convinced myself of the impossibility of such a course of thought or conduct being pursued by any woman possessing the affections of Sir Oswald Harvey. I recalled Miss Mansfeld's passionate look of love *that* night when she flung herself upon his bosom and he carried her through the flames; then, during their previous attachment, despite her waywardness, all said she loved him—and how he loved her I knew but too well. No, no! all I had heard was the vile colouring, or still viler invention, of a depraved woman. I resolved to discover some means by which she might be removed from the household—her mistress should know her unworthiness.

Mrs. Dunbar's influence was as a direct blessing from Heaven. She never lectured, she never preached, she never argued. Her words were spoken not unintentionally—for she was quite incapable of deceit—but with a purpose. I *felt* that she understood

me—that she loved me—that she desired the growth of my faith, and the cultivation of that earthly reason which is placed as a hedge round the tenderer plants and blossoms of existence, to prevent their being torn up or trampled under foot. In all spiritual things, in all scriptural knowledge, she was the counterpart of my dear grandmother, who seemed to live again in her; but in educational acquirements, in knowledge of the world, that particular world into which I had been so unexpectedly elevated, she was her superior. Yet, though she had acquired the wisdom of the one, she had lost none of the purity of the other, and appreciated the refinements which are supposed to be the birthright of “good society.” She had erected her own standard of “right and wrong” upon a basis which the world or the world’s opinions could not undermine. Her principles were the firmest I have ever met; her practice the gentlest, and freest from

ostentation: truly, her charity was that which suffereth long and is kind.

The time had arrived when I could leave Twickenham, and visit my old neighbourhood. All traces of recent disease had disappeared,—but no one could recognise me; in *that* was freedom of place and action.

I had, happily, some time known the difference between saying prayers and praying; and I did faithfully pray not to be abandoned to my own guidance.

I desired to impart my history to Mrs. Dunbar. I believed that, in reality, I should have little to tell her that she did not suspect. Such a confession would relieve my mind, and yield me the blessing of sympathy; but I lingered with my mystery from day to day, debating whether I had a right to impart what concerned others more than myself.

I had determined to leave Twickenham for Brecken the following Wednesday.

On Monday morning the sun shone so bright, and the air was so fragrant, that I yielded, as usual, to my boy's suggestion that I should go to the river to feed the swans; and, taking my work, I chose one of those delicious corners where, screened from observation by the glories of a weeping willow, I saw every shadow reflected from the opposite side, and enjoyed the sights and sounds with which nature banquets the observer's eye and ear—reward for mute attention. In those days there were neither railroads nor steamboats in the neighbourhood of London; and the seclusion of the river was only disturbed by the patient angler, or the oars of a party intent on a picnic at Ham, or on one of the sedgy "Aits," the resort and shelter of water-fowl. I had an affection for this particular nook. The bank had been railed in, so that my child could drop the swans' food into the water without danger; and a

break in the bank of the opposite "Ait" had been seized upon by a pair of beautiful king-fishers, who flashed and prowled, and ate their fish, without observing, or, perhaps, shy as they were, caring, that I oft-times watched them. My boy had fed the swans — (who, soon discovering that his tribute was paid, floated away in their spotless dignity) — and, his little arms crossed on the paling, was humming over some tune that had seized upon him during the previous day — (the tenderest airs in this way are often dreadful despots, enslaving every faculty, and chaining ear and voice to the one particular melody) — when a four-oared boat turned sharply round the corner of the Ait, and came into the water between me and the island. As the boats always took the channel on the other side, I was for a moment startled. My impulse was to go away: but I then remembered that I must cross the bank to escape, whereas, if I remained

where I was, no one could see more than the poor drapery of my black dress.

It was a gay party; youth and pleasure, and sounds of joyful laughter, filled the air around me as the boat glided along the stream—

“Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm.”

A silk awning canopied the seats. It was, then, no ordinary “boat.” Presently, a French-horn sent forth a few notes of such delicious melody, that my boy, forgetful of his own music, stood with parted lips, his beautiful hair floating around his head, his eyes wide open, and his rounded arms extended as if he desired to catch, and then strain the sounds to his heart.

One of the gentlemen suddenly exclaimed, as he came from beneath the awning—
“Stop! stop the music, and look at that boy! Do, all, ladies and gentlemen, look at that boy! Ye gods! what a head!

What a study for Lawrence! Silence the music!" He spoke with a foreign accent: I surely knew the voice.

"Too-too!" exclaimed my child—and he stamped his little foot on the sward. "Too-too, again!"

The boat steered close to the bank.

"Oh, let him come to us! We must have him!" said a lady, while freeing herself from the curtains.

"Too-too!" shouted the boy, impatiently.

"Yes, again and again, you wandering Cupid, if you come to me first," she exclaimed. "Get him for me, Carlo: there, I don't want these now!" And she flung a shower of water-lilies on the stream. "I don't want these now, — I want that child!"

The gentleman made some observation I did not catch; but he looked at me, and I heard the word "Mother." The lady's wishes were, however, not usually

thwarted. She stood erect in front of the awning. I recognised her instantly. Time had added power and intelligence to that animated, earnest, beautiful face; yet had given with them an expression more fierce and decided in its wilfulness than I had ever seen it wear before.

Conscious that I could not be recognised, I gazed at my wild convent friend—she who had facilitated my escape and contracted the mysterious marriage with “Carlo,” metamorphosed into a lady of quality, mingling, though very badly, the impetuosity of her foreign nature with the ease of English life. Her husband, too, however for a moment enraptured with the child, looked as cold and sarcastic as ever.

What a strange meeting!

And now the boat touched the bank, and the gentleman who had spoken was bending over my boy, who drew himself up haughtily and refused his hand.

“You frighten the child!” exclaimed the lady, springing as lightly on the sward as she had done over the crags a few short years before. “You terrify him much; you know children and dogs hate you. Play music again—continue from where you left off—catch it up.”

At that moment my child was rushing towards me, when the horn gave forth one of those lengthened notes that float the air with melody: it arrested his footsteps. His animated look of surprise and joy was a new beauty, even to me. He could not move—the child was spell-bound; one foot upraised, his noble head thrown back, his eyes fixed on me as they had been when he made the attempt to reach me—his finger on his rich, pouting lip—his little frame vibrating, but he did not move.

While I gazed on him I recovered my self-possession. And then the lady!—the wild, wilful, generous pupil of the mountain convent!—the passionate girl, without

a desire to conceal that passion, or an idea of maidenly reserve attached to it!—and there were, still, wildness and wilfulness, and generosity and passion, uncontrolled—impetuous as ever—all whirlwind!—ALL whirlwind! Even then—seeing only those two of that gay assembly—even then I was impressed by a conviction of the misery they made, each for the other.

CHAPTER IX.

You observe that only the gentleman and lady had at that time landed ; but there was a general flutter within the silk curtains, as if the whole party were on the move. The lady stooped to caress the child. It interfered with his attention to the music—it broke the spell ; and in a passion of resentment he clenched his little hand, and violently struck the beautiful face that bowed above him. The husband laughed, and repeated, “Children and dogs hate you !” and the lady, turning on him, gave voice to tones and words of violence that attracted the attention of those of the party who were beneath the awning. The sounds of the horn ceased ; fair ladies and their cavaliers crowded to the

side ; my wilful, impatient boy, repeated his command of "Too-too, again!" and in a moment, rushing forward, he slipped off the unprotected side of the bank into the water. I saw him disappear ! I attempted to plunge after him, but was prevented. There were screams, and a flashing of colours, and the water raised into foam, and arms stretched from the boat, and a cry — "Saved !" Yet, still they kept me back ; and at last angel hands held my boy aloft — he *was* saved ! and soothing, womanly tones, like those so often heard in the convent, entered my heart, and told me my child was safe ! Then there was a pause. But clear and distinct, though not loud, a mocking, cruel voice came from the boat, iceing my blood so that I could not move — "Such fuss about a beggar's brat !" it said ; " a boat-man could have played the water-dog as well as you — SIR OSWALD !"

No wonder I was paralysed. I cannot say whether time flew or lingered ; but,

dripping on the bank, the roses on his cheeks scarce faded, there was my boy clinging to his father's hand—the hand that had saved him !

I found myself at my husband's feet—I clasped his knees—I encircled both father and son in one embrace. I gazed at HIM ; but I could speak no word—my thoughts perished on my lips—I gazed, I wondered why his features were so hatched and worn. White threads of silver mingled with his hair. With the rapidity of lightning I read a history—the least mournful part of which was aversion to such a face as mine. Yet, that yielded to his generous sympathy. As he spoke, my hands unclasped, and I bowed my face, lest its homeliness should abridge his words.

“Poor woman—poor woman! He is quite safe! Will you not take your child? Poor woman!—not poor, but rich. Rich woman, with such a child!”

No memory of me! I thought I should

have rejoiced at this. But how emotion contradicts reason! I grovelled to the earth, hiding my disfigured face; but amid the woman's thrill of anguish for lost beauty came a pulsation of triumph—he had confessed the richness of the treasure; his child's loveliness penetrated to his very heart.

I *thought* a prayer for strength—for self-command; for like a bird fluttering beneath the upas tree, I felt that the poison of *her* shadow rested on me—one little moment more, and I shall be myself!

“Madame la Comtesse,” she said, addressing the wife of “Carlos,” “you have extemporised a drama; your fits of rapture are so frequent, that I did not heed the child, until Sir Oswald said he struck you. I should like to tame that boy—he's worth the taming. What a page he would make! Sir Oswald, you have saved him; give him to me—to be my page?”

Her page!

“He is not mine to give,” was the reply ;
“I wish he were ! See how the little fellow
rests upon my shoulder ! Now for a toss !”
and raising him in his arms, he added—
“Are you afraid ?”

“Toss high !” — and soon again, —
“More high !”

“A brave child,” said his father.

“And an excellent nurse,” said the
taunting voice. “A baronet, and M.P.—
a political leader — a powerful writer ;
nurse to a gipsy’s child ! What next, Sir
Oswald ? But give him to me,” repeated
Caroline Mansfeld, more than once ; “it
is easily arranged—such creatures never
refuse money. Give him to me !”

I felt her foot stirring my dress—or
had a serpent crept from out the copse and
writhed among its folds ?

“Get up, woman !” she said imperiously,
“and thank the gentleman in proper words
—that is, if you *are* the child’s mother.”

At once I grew into a giant, and stood

erect before her. She laughed scornfully, and after staring at me in her beauty, said, "It will be a matter of price—she cannot be his mother, Oswald; look at them both." "Will you give me the child to be my page? I will buy him of you!"

"Nay," exclaimed the Italian, "though he did flout me, if he is to be sold, I have the best right to him. If *I* had such a child, I should not have a truant husband, or pass so many lonely hours." The glorious eyes of my convent friend flashed upon Caroline. There was deadly hatred between these women. "Will you trust your boy to me?" she continued.

"To *you* sooner than to *HER*," I answered; "but to neither."

"And why sooner to her than to me?" demanded Caroline. "You *shall* tell me; nay, woman, you shall not move till you have told me!"

"If you were a mother," I replied, "you could not keep that child shivering as he is

—it may cost a life more precious than your own. I *will* pass!—Come darling!” I went to the boy, and held my hand to him—“Come darling!” But he clung to Sir Oswald, his beautiful head—round which his wet and tangled hair hung dripping—raised, while he smiled out the words, “Too-too, again!”

“I am *now* convinced he is not her child,” repeated Caroline, still more tauntingly. “Did ever child leave its mother for a stranger? Besides, *look at them!*” she reiterated. “I vow the boy has Sir Oswald’s expression when he plays at RESOLUTION. But Sir Oswald’s resolutions are written in water,” she continued, with increased contemptuousness of manner—“those of the child would be burnt in as with fire! Will you come to me, pretty boy?”

He clung more closely to Sir Oswald, beating at her with his disengaged hand.

“I don’t think,” said the Countess, “I

would have him for a gift. What should I do with him?"

"Conquer him—break his spirit—his heart—his neck if needs be!" was the answer, "so he be but conquered."

"And what then, Caroline?" questioned Sir Oswald, pressing the child in his arms.

"What then? Why, the excitement over, what matters then! We women only exist while conquering."

"I will carry the child home for you," said Sir Oswald to me.

"Remember!" called out Caroline—"remember I am to have that boy—remember!"

"Will you not lead the way?"

Mechanically I obeyed the voice: my heart beating—my brain throbbing with fearful emotions, one at war with the other, while tumultuous words jostled for the utterance I could not give.

Mechanically!

First beneath the willow, that enfolded

the path in a loving embrace which the sunbeams could not penetrate; then under the murmuring aspens: then, beside the old pollards, consecrated to birds, and trees—palaces of insect republics.

Speechless still!

Once I felt as if the path receded from my footsteps and I must fall, and the sweet voice said—

“Do not hurry! You are ill! This has been too much for you.”

“Too much!” Indeed too much, I felt, for mortal woman to bear. Silent still, I led the way—but slower. There was the cottage. I struggled to speak—in vain. Now on the garden-path—what could I want to say? Silent still! Here, the path borderings—thyme, marjoram, lavender, and rue—gigantic rue;—the porch! the porch at last!

CHAPTER X.

I WAS in my room ; the child undressed, in bed, in a sweet sleep—the hues of a glorious sunset, chequered by the crossed lattice, gleamed on the sanded floor ; Mrs. Dunbar, by my side, chafed my hands. My eyes and ears were opened at the same moment, and I heard her murmur, “Thank God !” I slid on my knees, and bent my head on my child’s bed. I knew that HE was gone—his presence was no longer near me. May God forgive me, but at the time I thought more of that,—than of gratitude. My child was saved—had not HE saved it ? My attitude was that of prayer—but my heart was rebellious, my mind filled to suffocation with speculations on the future.

“I met you, stalking like a ghost into the

door," said Mrs. Dunbar, "followed by a gentleman bearing the child dripping wet. He laid the boy upon the bed himself; and when he turned to speak to you, you had fainted."

"And he left me in that faint?"

"Certainly: what else could he do?"

How my heart beat; how the memory came of that other time when I was left helpless at his feet!

"Did he ask no question?"

"Yes. He asked if the boy were really yours."

"*Really* mine?"

"Yes, 'really yours'—those were his words."

"And you said—yes?"

"I said,—certainly."

"Well?"

"Ossee was very wilful; and while I raised you, he grasped at the gentleman's seals,—but he exchanged them for his purse. See, it is in his hand!"

“Anything more?”

“He seemed mightily taken with the child; told me to leave you, you would recover soon enough, but that the boy must have a warm bath and be wrapped in flannel; could I manage it? Fortunately the copper was heated, and Goody Styles washing. So the bath was ready. He waited to see him in the wash-tub. I never saw a man admire a child so much.”

“Well?”

“There’s nothing more.”

“Nothing more! Why, you have told me nothing. Sir Oswald must have been here ten—twenty minutes! How did he look? What did he say? Sat he not down?”

Dear, calm Mrs. Dunbar! I believe she thought the small-pox, or something as feverish, still possessed my brain.

“I suppose you must have heard him called Sir Oswald,” she said, after regarding me with her deep, attentive eyes, a moment, “but he left his card for you.”

“ And why did you not give it me ? ”

She smiled, I suppose at my impatience, and placed it in my hand.

“ He said he would be glad to know how the child progressed. Yes, I remember his saying *that*,” she added, after a pause, while recalling my questions.

“ How did he look ? ”

“ As I never saw him before, I cannot well tell; very like most great intellectual workers—worn and withered; grey—yes; and I think bald—yes. For though it is but a cottage (a true gentleman, I said to myself) he took off his hat as he entered. His eyes looked dim—very dim indeed. After going out, he returned—to the child. Little proud fellow that he is, he knows a gentleman, and held up his mouth to kiss him—and I think he would have remained longer, but a number of fine folk came trooping after him, and calling; some exclaiming as if they never saw a pretty English cottage before. I certainly was flut-

tered, and asked him to keep the fine ladies out—you lying there, poor dear! like one dead, and the child undressed. To see how tenderly he took his wet clothes off! And the little Turk would not go into the tub until the gentleman said ‘you must,’ and then he stepped in like a lamb. I never saw such a thing. Sir Oswald had power over him: he would not have been so easily managed by us. Goody Styles heard how the gentleman saved him when she went to call the doctor. You were so long in that swoon, I grew alarmed about you. The doctor was not at home; but Goody heard that the party went on to Hampton Court—such beautiful ladies, and such fine music! When I heard of the music I knew what drew our darling so near the water, though it need not have turned you so, for he was soon out again.” And so talking on, and on, the excellent woman helped me to lie down, even while twilight was toning down the gorgeous sunset. She gave me some tea, and left me

with a kind injunction to thank God and go to sleep.

To sleep! I thought I should never sleep again. My brain was like a kaleidoscope—one object confusedly mingling with another. For the first time came the consciousness that Sir Oswald could not, even from the boat, have dragged the child out of the river without his chest and arms being saturated with water; but *she* never noticed it. I never thought of it till then. Was it well that I had not the power of speech while he was with me?

Yes—it *was* well! It seemed to me as clear as light that disclosure must come; the father acknowledge the child—the child be trained by the father. But such disclosure must be made carefully—no, not hurried—it must not be hurried. Yes, it was well that I had remained silent, and was left insensible—such was my destiny.

I dared no longer trifle with my child's birthright. I could no longer dream of

moulding and guiding him myself: though so sweet, and calm, and gentle in his sleep, waking my boy would not be curbed by woman. Nature had claimed her tribute. Had not the boy clung to his father?

I was not free from the motherly fault of nursing the despot in the boy. Wives, while fretting at the yoke, often rendered hard and intolerable by the early pampering of the selfish husband, go on perpetuating the race of domestic tyrants by feeble non-resistance to the wiles and whims of their baby boys. I saw it all, and felt to the full my incapacity to render him worthy of his name and state. How could I—a village girl—have nerve or knowledge to train one of his fiery race!

“*Her page!*” Oh, how my blood boiled and rushed, when I recalled that insult—*his child her page!* And I smiled to think how she would feel when she knew all. And what an ALL—to change her glory into shame, to turn her nameless on the world.

Why? Oh, my mistake—my fault! my bitter fault—my CRIME—believing that I had a right to cast away the honoured name he gave me, and sacrifice MYSELF—blindly thinking I should be the only sacrifice—as if it were possible to remove a landmark without confusing the boundary—as if a commandment could be erased from the table of the Lord without a rent—as if there were no day of reckoning for offenders against God's law and man's. The law of God as clearly forbids self-sacrifice as any other heathenish idolatry. We are *not* our own, but HIS; our souls His essence; our clay elevated into life and beauty by Him; all that is high and glorious, and sanctified in us, is His—HIS now and for ever.

We are so knit together by the imperceptible but not less strong network of humanity, that we cannot accomplish what, in the pride of our hearts, we call *self-sacrifice*, without deranging laws that cannot fail to work rightly — if righteously: — and

bitterest scourge of all, my self-sacrifice had failed—utterly failed in its purpose; there was no love between *them* now. The bitter, sarcastic, beautiful thing!—to dare to speak such words as I had heard, and in such tones, to him! I could have slain her where she stood, all radiant in her insolent beauty—But who put *him* in *her* power?

Oh, to be guided like a little child! What was I, Mary, but a child,—a brief unreasoning self-willed child? It was such a coil, that in my feebleness I pressed my hand upon my eyes to shut all out—but I could not; a thousand thoughts were seething in my brain. A good Providence had taken up the right, and cleared my path! How? At sea again!—how was it cleared? How could I inflict myself on him, knowing his appreciation of the beautiful? And how comforted was I by gazing on the sleeping beauty of his child! How mysterious! that *he* should have borne him in his own arms—a proud man

like Sir Oswald! But he so loved beautiful children! No, not because of their beauty; he loved what he used to call the sanctity of childhood. Alas! what was I but a poor weak woman, one of whom there are tens of thousands in the world? hearts without heads! hearts without heads: and therein lies the mischief. What confusion a headless woman works, be her heart ever so large! What unravelling must come to pass! If I had but gone to Brecken before this! I could not go there now, if *they* were at the Hall. Then again, how was it that the proud Sir Oswald Harvey, so scrupulously guarded as to mere acquaintances, accompanied with those Italians? There was a coil between that beautiful convent-runaway and Caroline Mansfeld! There was no kindness, no sympathy between those women; they were "familiar," not "friends"—those two bright creatures hated each other with the fierceness of demons. I saw it in their eyes.

I could not sleep; I was feverish and restless, and crept softly off the bed to open the window. The air cooled my brow, and the stillness of the valley of the Thames was harmonised, not broken, by the murmur of the birds—their good-nights, not in song, but in sounds which I cannot define, but which all who have listened, while the twilight comes, must have often heard—a little flutter now and then—a restless chirrup—then the boom of a marauding cockchafer, or the guttural of a rail, or the last settling down of the hen-roost—the soft crop-crop of the cow in the pasture, with a stealthy pull at an imprudent woodbine—the glow-worm's lamp on the moss beneath the apple-tree—the first throb of the nightingale's song! Oh, those sounds will calm, and soothe, and tranquillise—or, a better word, will “pacify,” the wildest throbbings of a weary brain, when nature seeks not reason, but repose. I was almost asleep—my arm upon the window-sill,—

when the distant note of a cornet suddenly roused me. I knew it well. They were returning then! Could I but see him pass again! I flew to the river; the music strengthened with every step I took; sweet voices mingled together and chorused a popular duet of the time:—

“Oh Pescator del onda,

Fidelin.

Oh Pescator del onda,

Fidelin.

Vieni pescar in qua,

Colla Bella sua barca,

Colla Bella seneva—

Fidelin—lin—la!”

They passed at the other side of the ait; but I heard the measured dip of the oars, and saw the moonbeams rise and fall with the swell of the water. When the song ceased—though I ran along the bank heedless of brake or briar, following the sound—I did not hear his voice again, or any speaking voice that I could recognise.

CHAPTER XI.

I BELIEVE during the following, and for some days, my good and worthy friend thought my brain was turned. My child was as well and as wilful as ever, the next morning, screaming to go to the Thames — shouting for more “Too-too” — talking about “pritty ladies,” and crying for the “gempleman.” He had always soon wearied of his toys, but he retained the purse Sir Oswald had placed in his hand, after tossing its contents on the floor — now cherishing it in his bosom — then in his belt — and refusing to be, or to sleep, without it. The eternal cry for more “Too-too” suggested the idea of purchasing him a tin trumpet — (Twickenham was at

that time proud of its *one* toy-shop) — and Mrs. Dunbar procured a splendid specimen, with green cord and tassels. The boy's shout of delight, when he saw it, was a proof of the soundness of his lungs — it told far more than words of his anticipated enjoyment. When he put it to his lips, the first blast of discord threw him into a positive agony — he became deadly pale, and trembled from head to foot. The instrument dropped from his hands; and then, while tears rolled over cheeks that flushed as suddenly as they had paled, he stamped upon the toy and flung himself on the floor. Everything about my boy told me that my dreams of tutorage — of teaching him myself, and drawing him onward by the silken web of mother-love — were vain. He loved me — but he loved his own will far better.

Restless and undecided, I knew not what course to pursue. I was an example that “It is easier to teach twenty what is good

to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching."

I knew what was "good to be done," what my heart ached to do, yet I was still in Mrs. Dunbar's cottage! Mrs. Dunbar reminded me that I was neglecting Mrs. Clary's last order. Strange! I knew not even where the work was, until she said I had taken the embroidery with me to the river. I searched among the reeds and rushes, but could not find it; the basket, scissors, and thimble were there, saturated with dew—the work gone! Doubtless some of the village children who played along the bank had taken it, attracted by the brightness of the silks, for their dolls. Wherever it was, it was certainly spoiled; so, while Mrs. Dunbar went out into the village to inquire about it, I commenced another breadth. But that was soon laid aside, and I shut myself in my room, determined to write to Sir Oswald.

My brain and hand seemed alike paralysed. I could not frame a sentence — not even a letter! Why should I not go to Brecken? I could better concentrate my thoughts in my native village, among my native scenes. I could perhaps hear something that would strengthen my resolve. What a weak fool I was! Why should I desire anything to strengthen my resolve? What right had I to think of anything except rendering speedy justice to the child of Sir Oswald Harvey? There was nothing else I could do, or ought to do. That was my great duty. I was a coward! I knew that I simply proposed to myself to go to Brecken to gain time. I was trembling beneath the scourge of my lost beauty, instead of rejoicing that I could give my boy his rights, with the certainty that his father no longer loved the woman who had wrought this misery. No; I, and I only, had wrought it! And then I went over, and over, ALL!—the frightful,

miserable all—as I have done to you, Mary. Have patience with, and pity me!

I had not confided in any one; I was preying upon myself. Why did I not open my heart to Mrs. Dunbar?

The angel was in the house, yet I sought not the shelter of her wings! I would write to Sir Oswald. No; I would go to Brecken Hall, and, taking my boy in my hand, kneeling before Sir Oswald, as at a confessional, tell the whole story.

“Infirm of purpose!”—if ever woman was, I was!


Tenderly—with the wisdom of a mother and the sympathy of a sister—Mrs. Dunbar entreated me to show how she could help me, for she saw that I was sore disturbed. At last I could not bear to look at her, or to speak to her,—and oh, during those days, my darling child, how he did try me! His self-will seemed to increase a hundred-fold. If I attempted to sing to him (and music subdued him at once), I burst into tears;

and then the little creature would fling his arms round me with all the passionateness of his nature, and murmur, "Not pritty mamma now—but dear, sweet! oh, dear, sweet!" and once drawing out the treasured purse from the bosom of his little frock, he placed it in my hand and closed my fingers over it, looking fixedly in my face as if to command, that, as he had paid a price, there should be no more tears.

Another morning! Dear Mrs. Dunbar was going her cottage rounds, her basket on her arm, filled with those little comforts for the sick and aged, to procure which she debarred herself of what even moderate people would call "the necessaries of life."

CHAPTER XII.

I ENDEAVOURED to arrange my work afresh. I sat with my back to the door, so that I looked out on the meadow—not on the path beside which the rue flourished, and imparted its bitterness to every passing breeze—(to this day the smell of rue takes away my strength)—and was calmly gathering home my thoughts. You know how keenly susceptible I have ever been to the influence produced by atmosphere—the atmosphere which surrounds every living thing. All at once I was nearly overpowered by a reasonless anxiety. I arose to seek the cause of this, and—the Italian lady was before me! Holding up the strip of embroidery I had lost, she advanced into the room.



“This—this was the informer!” she said, after a long embrace, and kissing me on both cheeks; “but *you* must have known *me*, though not until you had left and I found this, did I recognise you. Then I remembered the graceful figure and the voice of my friend; but I had reason for keeping my own counsel. Ah, dear one! of all women you behold the most deceived—the most miserable!”

She flung off her shawl and bonnet, and yielded to such an agony of sobs and weeping that my own anxiety was swept away by the torrent of her tears: then, when exhausted, she poured water in the basin, and laved her face and brow, while her hair fell round her like a sable shroud. I gathered it up and wound it round her head, braid upon braid.

She drew me to her, and clasped her arms round my neck, laying her head on my bosom. “A little time, a little time!” she repeated: then, after a long pause,

“Finding you has been my salvation. No, you cannot understand, how could you?—but you will, you will—you *will* speak the truth, I know—you cannot do otherwise? To think of this meeting! Oh, my friend, how can I express myself—all will now come clear as the beautiful sky of my own country; you are my salvation—my salvation. I know all about you, and you shall know all about me!”

She “know ALL” about me! What could she mean?

“The instant I looked at you I was drawn towards you, though you are changed in face, my friend: and Carlo, the cruel traitor Carlo, did not know you—it would not have done for him to have known you yet. Ah, he is repelled by whatever is good and virtuous. But it was God’s mercy, God’s mercy to me, unworthy that I am! *Mea culpa! Mea culpa!* I will perform any penance—when *this* is over. You have a child—an angel! You are

not going to give him to that insolent woman to be her page? My friend, she would weary of him in a month—a week; and exchange him for a monkey, or a negro boy with a pierced nose and gold ear-rings!

“I will tell you my story! We met in Paris, soon after her marriage and mine. Carlo’s voice—(oh, such a voice!)—his society and talents—(he dances and acts like an angel)—aided his introductions—(I know not how he got them): and as I dressed like a queen, and was fresh and young (and all said, beautiful), we were the fashion; and Lady Harvey and myself swore eternal friendship before such a lovely altar in the church of Saint Genevieve!”

How thoroughly foreign she was, mingling all sensations together, and incapable of clear detail.

“Sir Oswald,” she continued, “never did more than endure us; but Mi Lady did not

mind that, for he lived only to give her pleasure. Ah, such a husband! Mi Lady loves excitement, and Carlo loves *écarté* and *roulette*. All this while Sir Oswald was ill, or studying—(dear, how fond the English people are of that ‘studying;’ it keeps them so still and dull!) One thing Sir Oswald did like—my husband’s beautiful voice; that great studying man’s heart and soul is music. But my husband played on another instrument also—the dice-box; and Mi Lady was easily drawn into play. *That* was a charming excitement—while it lasted. Of course it was Carlo’s *friend* who won from her—not Carlo. He wanted her money; but he pretended *then* it was her friendship, her sympathy—anything that such men as Carlo make believe they want, while they talk sentiment and sit at a lady’s feet to befool her. But that passed away for a time, and Sir Oswald only saw that Mi Lady had great love for *me*. We parted;

we corresponded—and so did my husband and Mi Lady.”

“No harm in that—the husband of her friend,” I said, “no harm in that!”

“You see no harm in that?” she repeated, while her eyes flashed; “*you* see no harm in it! then I say you are a very uncommon Englishwoman. But truth is, Mi Lady tired a little of my husband in Paris—she so loves change—and we went to the German and French baths; and Sir Oswald attended to his Parliament and his studying, and will not go abroad. So Mi Lady, dull—very dull, at the Hall—she invites my husband over; and, nothing but to please Sir Oswald with a make-believe of domestic life, he brings *me*.”

She spoke rapidly, and with an accent so foreign, that it required all my attention to catch her full meaning, though it had all the aid of that graceful action which is more French than Italian.

“A new plan came into his wicked head.

He thinks had he no wife, Lady Harvey might leave her changeless English home for a gayer life."

My spirit rose indignantly at that. I considered it a foul slander. I was too jealous of the honour of her who was considered Sir Oswald's wife—believing herself his wife—to suppose she could look even upon an angel with impure thought; but to regard such a *thing*; to love *him*—she, a well-born English gentlewoman! oh, it was monstrous!—a jealous suggestion of the glowing Italian, who limited the light, the glory, the purpose of existence, to a vile intrigue, and dared to call it LOVE!

"A gayer life?" I repeated. "Leave Brecken Hall with your husband?"

"Yes; many ladies would. Do you remember my Carlo, how handsome and beautiful he is; and so clever. What, you contempt him? Ah, you blind woman!" She seemed ready to fly at me for not admiring her husband!

What are some women made of ?

“But,” I contended, “you must be mad even to think it! Leave such a gentleman as Sir Oswald Harvey, the best and noblest man in England! She is the mistress of his house, receiving honour as his wife.”

“So she does,” interrupted the Italian, with her wild look of astonishment; “but what is that to you? What can you know of Caroline, Lady Harvey? I tell you, she has supplied my husband with money to pay his debts!”

“Well, she might do that from generosity!”

What a laugh of bitterness and contempt burst from her lips !

“Why, she tired of Sir Oswald long ago; and what she tires of, she hates. She is restless as a panther”—(how well I remember once thinking her beautiful and graceful as a panther!)

“It is her sport to destroy happiness—to rend, and leave—(do you not recall

what she said about conquering your boy?) —and all to prove her power. I tell you, she hates me! I am younger and more beautiful. She is thin and faded; the disease of your country is wasting her frame—paling her peachy cheeks; her maid says, that were it not for cosmetics and stimulants she would look a ghost. I like to hear her cough! and, to keep that still, she takes sedatives—and they madden her more; and the worse she is, the more she plays the young girl! Bah! I hate and scorn her.”

Was Caroline Mansfeld come to this; or was it the fierce raving of a jealous woman?

“One thing more,” she continued; “I could take my husband to my heart just for that one clever thing—she trifled with him until he netted her in, to make money of her—for he is loveless, as heartless, devilish, as a fiend. I will joy to see her proud spirit crushed and writhing under my feet. Carlo has netted her in every way.”

“Insanity!” I exclaimed. “Have you forgotten that she is hedged round with the protection of one who has been her very slave for years—who loves her?”

“Bah! bah!” she exclaimed bitterly. “*Did* love her!—and your Englishmen are constant! But no constancy could endure her caprice—her——. Bah! It is months since he has met her, except in public, and you—*you* believe in her honour! *Her honour!* Here, in my bosom—I never separate from them day or night—I have proofs of what would make Sir Oswald, if he be man and not marble, fling her from his house—a spotted tigress as she is!” She paused, and turned from me. “And now comes the worst of all. While I was preparing my thoughts—gathering a cup-full of bitterness for her—(oh, may she not die till she has drunk it to the lees!)—with my proofs *HERE*—when I told him how I should expose her, Carlo has dared to tell me—(how can I repeat it! Would

I had been dashed to pieces from that wall the night we fled the convent!) He has told me! (Saints, Virgin, Faith, were all forgotten for that man—abandoned, for my love of him. I made him my heaven—he has made me a hell!—a hell!” She paced the room rapidly, speaking at intervals. “I secured her letters, and told Carlo I would give them to Sir Oswald. That was since you saw me. He dared me to it, saying if I disturbed him with my jealous pranks, and went such lengths, he would publish to the world that I am not his wife! What think you of that?) He has told me that I am not his wife!—I not his wife! And then his plan changed. He stormed and entreated, threatened and implored me—the mean wretch! yes, on his knees did he implore me to return them—and if he dared would get them through my life; and finding that useless, he revealed an intent, which now I know he has long thought of, that if I interfere with any of his *plans* (he

calls intrigues 'his plans')—he dares me to *prove* my marriage. Do you not see now how good it was our meeting? Now, I can tell Sir Oswald all; and if Carlo does what he threatened—which he will do, to invalidate my testimony and prove me naught!—you, an Englishwoman, saw me married—you know you saw it! Have you no words? You saw it! Oh, do not forget that it was *I* who rescued *you*! You *saw* me married?"

"I did."

"And will prove it?"

"I will—I will prove it."

Again she flung her arms round me, while uttering the most exaggerated expressions of gratitude. "Only think, after this threat from Carlo," she said, when a little calmed—"only imagine our descending to the drawing-room, acting our parts to each other, and enrapturing the company with our duets and trios—in which Lady Harvey joins." Again she spoke of Sir

Oswald. "I know from her maid every turn of their inner life—they have not met for months, except in public. *You*, who know your own countrymen, can you tell me how he still contrives to bear with her?"

"The remains of his old love for her," I said. "You cannot understand the great fidelity, the tenacity, of English affection."

She stamped her foot violently—"I have no patience with him—no patience with him. He can have no remnant of affection for her. She openly treats him with caprice or contempt. He meets it all with well-bred indifference—still giving her respect—'RESPECT' in truth, for HER! The other day she said something to him most bitterly insulting, and then left us alone. I spoke to him, lamenting that he had not more sympathy or kindness—I hardly know what I said—from his wife. Another man would have been at my feet and kissed my hands in gratitude; but he rose up like an emperor, and, making me a

great English bow, said, while leaving the room,—

““Madame has apparently forgotten that she has spoken of my wife and her hostess!””

I clasped my hands, and, completely off my guard, forgetting all but admiration of Sir Oswald, exclaimed, “Just like him; always true and noble!”

I saw my imprudence when it was too late. She was all Italian in suspicion. Quick to comprehend, the smallest clue would lead her through a labyrinth. She drew a chair, seated herself opposite to me, and said,

“You know Sir Oswald Harvey! You did not see him for the first time when he carried your boy to this cottage! I see, I see. Lady Harvey herself observed the child’s likeness to Sir Oswald. Why not tell me? Do you think I would scorn you?”

I sprang to my feet.

“You scorn *me!*” I exclaimed. “*You scorn me!*” I repeated.

There must have been something suddenly fierce and fearful about me, for she stood up, looked at the door, and then at me.

“You told me you were married,” she said, in a subdued tone.

“And that I tell you still, a lawful wife — a loyal wife — loving my husband more than all things on this earth. Listen to me, as I have done to you. What you require of me I will do. If your husband for any purpose attempts to brand you as one who ought to be, but is not, married, I will at once assert my knowledge of you, and of the ceremony I saw performed.”

“You will faithfully do that?”

“I will.”

“I came to town with Lady Harvey. I told her I had a distant visit to pay, and she was glad; for her maid had told me her Lady went often privately to see a doctor in London; so that left her free — she was glad. I told her not to wait — if I was delayed I would post down to Brecken Hall.”



Here was a painful picture. I saw, in imagination, these two women — knowing each other to a certain point, and hating each other with the hatred of their passionate natures — shut up in a carriage, during that drive, discussing dress, and music, and amusements, watching the opportunity of inflicting a sharp stab each on the other, and then smiling off the treacherous thought. Caroline, the most skilful; the Italian, the more deeply dangerous, goaded as she was by her husband's baseness, and lashed almost to insanity by an exaggerating jealousy! But when did jealousy *not* exaggerate? Of all our evil passions it is the one least under the control of justice.

Again she chafed — and paced the room: then suddenly said, "Will you come with me to Brecken village, and remain there? Will you go with me on the instant to Brecken, and be ready to speak the truth? I know my trial will soon come!"

“I will not go with you on the instant; but I will be ready to speak the truth.”

“And by what name shall I call my witness?”

“I cannot tell you now; but within a week you shall know it.”

“You will not go with me to Brecken—now?”

“I will not go with you to Brecken—now.”

“How is it that you echo me?”

“Lady, you came to me a suppliant—not a questioner. I owe you a debt of gratitude—I will endeavour to pay it; but I will not answer your questions!”

“Ever the same,” she said, and for a moment there was her old smile. “You English are so painfully consistent. Well, I remember how we used to say, that all of us, with the Abbess at our head, could make nothing of you. For a long time we thought you a Princess in disguise; and you are silent and cold as ever.”

“Your violence has made me cold.

Even now I cannot believe that Lady Harvey is what you insinuate."

"You do not believe that I have reason for this burning jealousy? — Here; read those letters then!"

She held them towards me.

"No," I said; "why should I? I would rather remain with my unbelief. The shame of any sister-woman is deep pain to me."

"Ah!" she answered, "they comfort me! I hear her, and see her; and talk to her, and 'Mi Lady' her; and we smile on each other! — ay, kiss each other still. But I know what rests on my heart. There! I press the proofs of her guilt to my breast, as fondly as a mother presses her child; they are my life — my REVENGE!"

I never saw a creature so transformed as the Italian by these violent emotions. Beautiful though she was, she became like one possessed by an evil spirit.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was a great and inexpressible relief to me when Katerina "the Countess" left the cottage. She had but a light notion of honour, and would have been guilty of "worming" out my secret, had it been possible; but I fought off her questions. I had no doubt she possessed a power over her hostess which her husband's threat had prevented her asserting. How would it be now? — now, when she had the proof of her marriage within her grasp! She was more fiery and quite as cruel, but not as proud-hearted, as Caroline. When she was really gone, the atmosphere was changed — purified. I could breathe and think. I reproached myself with ingratitude; but her contact with that evil man,

and the evil part of the world, had undermined what was originally good and generous in her nature, and fostered her evil passions into demoniac strength.

To tarry an hour longer I could not: I must release Sir Oswald from this scourging bondage, let him do with me as he pleased afterwards; but he must be released. How could I approach him—how would he look, how speak—what matter?

My love could not have been "perfect,"—it had never cast out fear. I looked upon him as Persians look upon the sun they worship. Had they been each to other what I believed they would have been, I do not think—whatever I might have brought myself to intend—I do not think, that even the stern, mighty cry of "Justice to your child!" "Justice to your child!" night and day, day and night, knocking at my heart—could have forced me to disturb HIS happiness. I do not for a moment attempt to justify this. I know that in a

well balanced nature the affections are distributed with entire harmony; the more the heart is opened, the more it can relieve and care for, and cherish and nourish, and give to all, a very wealth of love. I knew — I know — the Wrong can never be Right; but, even to this hour, I do believe I would have sacrificed my child, *his* child, as well as myself, to the father's happiness.

My married life began on a wrong principle, as all unequal marriages must do; but mine was terribly, tumultuously, wrong.

I felt strong in the power that I could undo the twisted knot. I would set him free of this woman before she was disgraced. I would not trust myself to tarry — I would *at once* seek and see Sir Oswald. Enough of the woman lingered about me — (I must not say "lingered," for it had a strong hold on me somewhere) — to make me change my black merino for a black silk dress. I wrote a few lines to Mrs. Dunbar, to entreat her

to watch over my child,—telling her I was called to perform a duty, and she should hear from me very soon, when she should know all. I astonished the Twickenham haberdasher on my way, by the purchase of a new bonnet, crape veil, and gloves. I hardly knew myself when I added a shawl, sufficiently handsome for mourning. The ferry-man who took me across, a little beyond his beat, landing me under the lawn of Ham House, did not recognise Mrs. Stanley's "school missus." I soon passed the stately trees of Ham, through the pretty village and by the dear old church, and across the green meadows of Petersham, thus avoiding Richmond Hill and catching the London coach. I slept that night at an hotel, and found myself towards the evening of the next day in my native village of Brecken.

I alighted at the wayside inn, and engaged a room for the night. I thought twilight was long coming; but when it came, I needed no guide to my father's grave. I must see

that first—to-morrow for Sir Oswald. I was soon in the churchyard. Above the grave was a tomb, inscribed:—

TO THE MEMORY OF A GOOD MAN,
GERALDUS KENNETT,

TO WHOM

TWO GENERATIONS OF THE VILLAGERS OF BRECKEN
WERE INDEBTED FOR ALL THEY KNEW.

THIS STONE HAS BEEN CONSECRATED TO HIS MEMORY
BY ONE OF HIS GRATEFUL PUPILS.

Well I knew who that pupil was.

The other dear grave was blooming as a garden; the shrubs I planted there had been preserved.

Twilight was yielding to moonlight; the shadows of the great yew tree, and of the cropped limes that sheltered the entrance, were broken by graves and simple monuments. I repeated "God's acre,"—"God's acre," over and over again. I felt conscious that the spirits of those I thought of were

with me. How I prayed that they might be rendered visible! I did so long for a "sign" of what I so faithfully believed; and yet, when the shadow of a moving substance rested at my feet, I dared not look up; and when the voice of the old sexton spoke, I almost thought it came from the spirit-world.

"Did you know Master Kennett and his mother, that you have been looking after them so? If you're so curious about them, maybe you'd like to see what's put up in the church, with the great Harvey monuments, in memory of *his* daughter! Sir Oswald ordered it. Ah, better if like had found like!—and, to die abroad! No one there knew how a grave should be made—no one! Ah, very sad, very sad!"

I followed him mechanically into the church,—to do, what?

Even if it had been sufficiently light, I could not have read a line, for my blinding tears.

“Ah,” continued the garrulous old man, “she was a pretty creature—a pretty little creature. And I say Sir Oswald was right,—she *was* pretty! Not near so tall as you—but perhaps you were her friend?”

Alas! I could not say I was.

We sat side by side on a tombstone, the old sexton and I—side by side. Old Thomas loved to talk. The tree-shadows became fainter and fainter. He did not wish me to speak, but crooned his old-world talk about “his people,” who lay around us. He never after the first moment cared who I was, or where I came from, or where I was going that night. He was pleased to have a listener; and I had only to speak a word to turn his feeble voice from one subject to another. Presently the bats began to flit, and the well-remembered owl-hoot to break forth at intervals from the ivy-covered steeple. The heavy perfumes of evening fell with its dews; and still the old man talked on. “Ah, fine feathers did not

always make fine birds—and there was one often lonely enough, for all her finery. They knew that—all said that: they said, too, a fine place was Brecken Hall, but never quite like itself since the old lady died. She was a mighty grand old gentlewoman; but such a haughty! She'd give a great charity just as you'd throw a bone to a dog. She knew me when my hair was black, and she knew me when 'twas white; and I raised my hat dutiful to her for fifty-two Sundays a year, twice every Sunday for two and thirty years; and poor Master Kennett did count up for me how many times that made that I raised my hat—but I forget! Yet she never spoke to me but once. She came down to the churchyard about having the bough of a lime-tree cut off because her tall footman could not pass under it without stooping, and he following her into the church—and I was digging a grave hard-by. Sometimes I use the pick, and sometimes the spade—the spade was a little on the

path. 'Man,' she says, 'remove that filthy spade!' Oh, she was terrible haughty, she was—terrible!—and the spade was a new one! I should like to have dug her grave with that same spade! But they put such as her in vaults; not half so natural—nor according to Scripture, ashes to ashes, dust to dust—them's the words—and them don't hold with vaults. I sartainly should have liked to dig her grave with that new spade! Filthy she called it! She was a fine woman, but wonderful haughty."

I do not know why, but I wanted courage to rise from that seat and go to my little lodging. While I trembled at the old man's tale, I was enchained by my desire to hear more about Brecken Hall and its inmates; and yet I feared that a word might bring me some fresh agony, or disturb my stern resolve. A carriage rolled past the churchyard entrance—its lights flashing through the trees, so different from the pure, pale moonbeams.

“ Ah !” croaked the sexton, “ that’s the old Doctor, from Ratten ; shouldn’t wonder if he’s away to the Hall.”

My old, kind Doctor !

“ Is any one ill there ?” I questioned.

“ Can’t say very ill ; but he’s up there betimes, meeting the great London doctor. My Lady often has freaks of illness. And as to Sir Oswald, I’m an old man, an’ he’s a young one ; but I dare say I’ll see him —” he extended the long bony fore-finger of his right hand, and, with a low, chuckling laugh, pointed it three times downward.

I sprang from him with a frenzy of horror and anger ; and as I laid my hand on the latch of the churchyard gate, the church clock struck the hour. One — two — (every stroke was laden with memories, all throbbing through my heart and brain — the keen, clear, sharp-voiced clock ; I hung upon the gate to save myself from falling ; I closed my eyes to keep back my tears) — three — four — five — (visions of

those I had loved and lost passed before me; *they* knew me; to them I was not masked; I was strengthened and re-assured by their presence and the blessing of their tender hands on my brow; hours seemed to have passed, yet I heard and noted the strokes) — six — seven — eight — nine — ten! “Ten,” last and loudest. I was recalled to the things of this world by the sexton’s querulous croak. He kept flapping round me like a raven. “Eh! be ye going to keep me in the churchyard all t’night?”

Before I returned to the inn, there was another spot to visit. How could I tell — but, after all was disclosed, he might desire that we should live apart, taking his boy to his home and inheritance — without me. Well; that was cloudy. I saw no path — I could make no guess; but, while at liberty, I would see my childhood’s home once more. I clambered up the wayside bank, as I had often done when a

child, and found myself beneath the tree that you have heard of in the early part of my life's history. Presently, a horse cantered up the road, and passed beneath the bank; it was not needed to remind me of the day I first saw *him* in his beauty.

The moon was at the full. I knew the scene best by daylight, for in these early times I had a dread of moonlight influences — the moonlight made me cold and shivering, and my dear grandmother had warned me against it. I clasped the old tree to my heart as if it were endowed with life — an ancient friend, whose lips could feel my kiss but wanted power to return it. I laid my cheek against the gnarled bark, and wept tears — not of passion — hardly of regret; just natural tears that come with *memories*, be they grave or gay — when they are but faint echoes of voices far off or lost!

How sweet and calm was the external world! yet I would not have those dear

ones back to this troublous earth — not if a wish might bring them !

I never could comprehend the selfish desire that those we have loved should put off immortality, and — forsaking the companionship of angels and the effulgence of the presence of the Triune God — return to us, to be again of the earth, earthy ; encumbered by the cares and pains that are inseparable from those who wait outside the portals of the “Hereafter.” I never could comprehend *that* at any time ; but since it has pleased God in His mercy to extend my belief to the knowledge that the more holy, and charitable, and righteous I become, the nearer are those spirits (united to me still, though before me in the heavens), permitted to approach me, freighted, like the angels we read of in the Sacred Book of our salvation, with comfort and suggestion, and a heavenly watchfulness, that transmutes the dust of time into the gold of immortality — since this conviction

has been afforded, and I believe in the "cloud of witnesses," and know that my dear ones are near me as surely as I know that the stars surround the earth during the day time, though I see them not—since then, my darling Mary, I have so prayed to be rendered worthy, working by faith, of the companionship of the glorious hierarchy, and the still more glorious presence of HIM who comforteth—since then, never once have I wished the dear departed ones back in the flesh with me! No, no; I am never alone, never lonely. You often say—"I endure my solitude so well."

My darling, you have not yet realised what it is to feel that spirits of the just are perpetually around you, chastening, comforting, counselling—though unseen, except to the eyes of faith!

There, do not smile. Have you never heretofore been called on to believe what you do not understand?

I walked along the garden-paths one after the other, up and down. They were neatly tended, and I gathered leaves here and there, from such plants as I had known all my life. There was light in my grandmother's little chamber. I crept cautiously round to the lattice window. The curtains were not drawn. I looked in,—it was still and reposeful. A rushlight was burning within the fender, in a tall shade, and the holes made great circles of light on the floor and walls. "Some one feeble or ill there," I thought. Had I made a noise? A thin hand pushed back the bed-curtains and a figure in the bed was half raised, and looked out; then sunk back on the pillow. The room was still consecrated to old age. No light in the kitchen; but the moonbeams played on the gilt ornaments and broad face of the ticking clock—(our own old clock—I should know it, dear ancient truth-teller! among a thousand)—and flickered among the tins, and on the warm-

ing-pan. The school-room! Alas, for that dear, noisy room! I believed in it as so very large, so spacious; now it was dwarfed and changed. Instead of the long, notched, and well-inlaid table, a circular one, with figured cover, and brass lamp; — papered walls — no boys' names there now; though the lads were, now and then, punished for writing them, yet some of the names my grandfather often pointed out with pride to his friends, when the school was up.

“Michael Myles,” such an arithmetician, who lived to be a clerk in the Bank of England. “Ernest Grey:” my dear father loved to repeat long verses of his poetry, and declared, had he lived to be a man, his name would have been known wherever the English tongue was spoken. He was an orphan; I remembered his pale, pinched face, and deep blue wandering eyes; he dined with us on Sundays, and my grandmother, when he grew weak and ill, used to beckon him out of school and regale him

with mutton broth and strawberry jam, then lay him tenderly on her bed "for a rest;" and, one day, the rest continued longer than usual; poor little Ernest had turned his face to the wall—and died!

I once saw that dear father showing a great tall gentleman, who brought me a silk sash from somewhere, placed me on his shoulder and asked me to be "his little wife, hate Buonaparte, and live in a drum." How my father marched *him* into the school-room, told the boys to give Major Armstrong three cheers and they should have a holiday, and then pointed out where he had written, "Johnny Armstrong, who won't cross the ass's back but will be a soldier:" and then he reminded my father how he had punished him for insubordination, which my father, having forgotten, stoutly denied, maintaining that he was always his pride. All—all gone: papered over with crimson paper, that made the room smaller, and look hot. A dark-haired man sat beside

the table, on which lay an open ledger. I had overlooked him in my dismay at the papered walls. After a few moments I recognised him as Sir Oswald's steward. I almost hoped there might be no light in the little parlour where I used to work my embroidery. Oh that desire to invest the crumbling things of earth with immortality, as if aught in creation continues as it was! There was no light from *within*, but the moon flung in her broadest rays through *my* window. There was the tree beneath which I first saw Caroline Mansfeld,—the porch, matted with roses: there, in that corner—I believed on that very chair—I sat, the morning when Sir Oswald, to accomplish his revenge on the fierce but glorious beauty, commanded me forth to be his bride. My heart beat fast and low. I tried to undo the hasp,—it was bolted inside. What need? I pressed my face against the glass, and could see *all* within—all. I almost fancied I could hear the

tap of my grandmother's stick, see her seated in her own chair, mark the gracious smile on her dear lips, in answer to mine, as I raised my head from my embroidery; yes, and hear her gentle voice, "Here am I!" It was enough. I went out of the garden by the old entrance—out into the road. Strange, that while in the church no thought of my marriage ever came into my mind, but at the gate the whole scene was with me.

I found my landlady standing at the door of the small hostelry on the look-out for me. "I warrant me you lost yourself," she said; then added, "I thought I might ha' had to send the bellman after ye!—but some are wonderful fond of walking in the moonlight, though I don't hold wi' it at all—daylight for Christians say I, all over the world! and thank God for it." She placed the little tea-table in my room; but, possessed with the spirit of gossipry, she said "she did not know what was 'up' at Brecken Hall; maybe some of the company

poorly, as the old Doctor's carriage went past, and another carriage; but they were always '*carridging*' it, night and day. In the old lady's time, carriages only arrived at proper hours, and were counted rubbish without four horses—ah, those *were* times! Maybe one of the lap-dogs was ill. She should know from the old Doctor to-morrow—who was coming to see *her*; but of course the old Doctor was very close; and she knew what belonged to doctors too well to ask 'inquiring questions.' Still, it was nothing to say, Doctor, I hope Sir Oswald was not ill last night—your horses were in such a foam that I didn't know what to think?"

I let her go on.

"All the neighbours knew her well—she had nothing to say of nobody, or to anybody; but there certainly were some at Brecken Hall now that never would dare set foot in it during the old lady's time. And all the world knew what was Sir

Oswald's wish, and what wasn't Sir Oswald's wish; though them that ought to mind it didn't mind it. It was nothing to her—her bit of a house was her own freehold; but Sir Oswald was a gentleman, every inch of him. Poor Sir Oswald! her heart ached for him—and he such a gentleman—poor Sir Oswald!

And this woman had degraded him into an object of pity within sight of his ancestral trees!

“What hour do they breakfast at the Hall?”

“At all hours. Sometimes My Lady will breakfast so early that the servants sit up all night to be ready; at other times, not till mid-day.”

“And Sir Oswald?”

She did not know. We parted for the night.

“To-morrow,” I thought, “to-morrow will make a difference!”

CHAPTER XIV.

I SLEPT what to all seeming would be called soundly ; for, as I lay down, so I awoke—my head in the same position on the pillow, the handkerchief beneath it, undisturbed. I do not tell you I dreamed, for I do not think I did ; but I believe I was taken out of myself, and, with sight veiled, but not obscured, I passed the portals of Brecken Hall. Remember, Mary, I had never been there. I entered, paced the hall, mounted the stairs, met strangers hurrying to and fro—among others my good old Doctor. I saw Sir Oswald—not Caroline Mansfeld ; but the Italian and Carlo loomed past me like thunder-clouds.

Death, I felt, was in the Hall ; but, who was stricken ?

I knew the several doors—the library the

drawing-room, music-hall ! Yes, Mary, I see you are preparing to account for every written word ; and would do so for it all—if all were recorded here. You would endeavour to prove that by some physical cause, or mental process, which *you* do not understand, but which some very learned and distinguished person does, everything of the sort *can be* accounted for, though it is not, while the attempted elucidation is quite as incomprehensible as the *fact*.

You will say that my agitation, or a disordered state of mind for the time being, confounded the present with the past. You know me to be gifted with belief in a power, which *I* call one of the handmaids of Christian faith, but which you, with others, good people and true, consider as opposed to it. And because of this belief of mine, you shake your head, and ask me not to linger. I do not see that the light by which my latter-day pilgrimage has been illuminated could, with your peculiar tem-

perament, render you more safe or happy than you are. So I do not "linger." You will learn more of this hereafter, when I am gone and you read the memories of that night, when she who records them is in the divine presence of the TRIUNE in whom she trusts.

I sat up, wearied as if by a night's watching, with a certainty that the sun was shining on a very troubled day. I was confused as to my own identity. Had I, or had I not, seen Sir Oswald? Was I at the wayside inn, or in the ancestral Hall of the Harveys?

What was that dull, hollow sound?

I listened with my heart upon my lips. It was early; yet, when I looked from the window, I saw that the village was astir, and groups of two and three whispered together. There were no loud voices; I heard only a confused murmur.

Again that boom!

Was it the clock giving voice to the

morning? The clock was not wont to be so slow—it used to be sharp-tongued; nay it was so last night.

No; *that* is no clock—it is the bell that

“Takes no note of time, but by its loss!”

—the passing-bell.

I saw the groups gather into a crowd—wondering, agitated; every village dweller seemed in the street—some only half dressed.

Oh! that bell—so solemn, so stern, so sad—rousing the early morn to sorrow, as it mingled with the first sunbeams. Men lifted their hats and looked up, as if to *see* the sound.

Yes, Death was at the Hall; but, who was stricken?

I was calm—I had no fear—I had seen *him* alive; it was not Sir Oswald!

The sound of horses' hoofs—the rider in the Hall livery. He was stopped and questioned.

I heard the word "DEAD!" and again the bell tolled it out.

There were exclamations and murmurs of astonishment—*but no tears.*

I was right — it was *not* Sir Oswald.

The village wheelwright had a strong voice, and he exclaimed—“I tell thee, Master Ralph, it be impossible! I saw My Lady pass yesterday, quite early—two ladies. I heard them drive back, near sunset it was—it’s quite impossible! Moreover, at the turn of the road, where it is narrow—and I stood on the bank, close by Master Kennett’s old scule—I saw My Lady half out of the carriage window, and heard her cry out to the coachman, in such a fierce voice, to drive ‘faster! faster!’ and as she cried, I heard another one laugh, and I wondered what new lark was up with the ladies; and then, something in My Lady’s voice, as the horses galloped, told me it warn’t a lark. I tell’ee it’s im-

possible! Why, her voice was as strong as a trumpet!"

And again there were half murmured words, and whisperings; and the groom—pale as a ghost himself—spurred on; and one by one, the women, scared and colourless, dropped into their cottages, and closed their doors—great stillness was in the village.

And this made all the louder the tolling of the solemn bell; and the glaring sunshine fell in its full heat without a shadow—its brightness seemed to defy the bell, every toll of which made me tremble.

At last I sank upon my knees, with clasped hands and outstretched arms—I know not if I wept, or prayed, or wondered most.

CHAPTER XV.

THE tolling of the death-bell—the rumours, each contradicting the other—the surmises—the conflicting opinions—the determination of one person to believe, and another to disbelieve, whatever was reported—as the day waned, the riding and driving to and fro of messengers and carriages, servants from the Hall and to the Hall, combined at length into one appalling fact—Lady Harvey was DEAD!

The first terrible tale was, that poison, either from her own hand or forced upon her by a “foreign woman”—“during their drive from town”—had done its work;—she was dead!

Then some remembered how all her family had faded away in consumption,

and recalled how thin she had grown, and what a cough she had, and how she dressed and scorned care, and that her mother died from bursting a blood-vessel while in a fit of passion. They agreed that her death might have been expected; but my landlady was inclined to believe in the poison — it fostered her constitutional hatred of foreigners. After a time she almost carried me down to her little parlour — “I looked so ill,” she said; “there I could hear the news.”

I certainly did hear all that was said in the street, as well as in the adjacent kitchen. I heard the landlady, Mrs. Burton, declare she was certain Lady Harvey had been poisoned — those foreigners always carried all manner of poisons about with them. She forced it on her.

But this assertion was contradicted by a voice of seeming authority.

“Poison!” it exclaimed; “poison forced on Lady Harvey! It would be a rare

strong hand, and a stronger will, that could force her to take anything she did not like. And in her own carriage, too! The stranger might have a hidden power over my Lady — no one can deny that; my Lady was always wild and inconsiderate — wild, girl and woman! Didn't I live many a weary day at Mansfeld Grange? Wild, girl and woman! Ah! if any poor girl played the games she did, how soon her character would go! — God keep us all!" she added, "women especially, from sin *and foreigners!*"

And to this Mrs. Burton said a hearty "Amen!"

I thought it such a curious prayer — "from sin and foreigners!" — it certainly was thoroughly English.

Death, if it did not make "holiday," made idleday. The men had no intention of going to their usual occupations. They stood about, watching for news, they swarmed around the opposite beer-house,

particularly at the window, inside and outside, seated on the long stone bench, or on wooden seats that circled the great ash, the patriarch of Brecken trees ! Many a time have I sat beneath its shadow, and played at "thread-my-needle" round those very seats ! But there was no "beer-shop" there in those days—the beer-shop is a modern invention to destroy the comfort of English homes. The men sat and lounged, and told each other tales of murder, and poisoning, and sudden death.

Sometimes a gentleman on horseback would come clattering down the road like a wild huntsman, reviving the excitement. Then the stately carriage of some rich neighbour bowled along. Then a post-chaise with four horses galloped through, and they said that was Sir Oswald's "man of business."

The school children were all at liberty, but even the boys were overawed. I saw them at the old sun-dial, their little brown

heads clustered together like a bunch of hazel-nuts ; but, after a time, the greater number disappeared—they went silently away into the woods.

The women were, one and all, pale ; some as if paralysed—dumb, except on the one subject. My landlady assumed much authority over her neighbours, who crowded the large kitchen, on the ground that Doctor Ridge (my old, kind friend) would be certain to stop there. He was to have seen her this very day ; he would be sure to call on his way home ; he never neglected rich or poor—certain. But when he came in, they must go out—he would surely tell her all, but he would not, of course, tell *them*—it was not to be expected ; so they must go out,—and then, when he was gone, they should hear facts from her. What a patroness she was that day !

I recalled every detail of my interview with the Italian, and drew my own conclusions as to the cause of this terrible cata-

strophe. I know it is wicked to rejoice when a fellow-creature is summoned to appear before that dread tribunal whose verdict can only be known to us at the Great Day; and it was not joy, I hope, that throbbed in my heart. But my heart did throb — and not with pain.

I felt like a captive suddenly and mysteriously relieved from a heavy chain. I was released from my dungeon. Above all, I had a clearly-defined feeling of intense thankfulness that no act of mine had deprived *her* of the shelter of his name. Yet, mingled with all this was a terror of what was to come.

Sir Oswald had much to forgive. Would he not forgive the mother of his child for that which love for him had wrought? I would not force myself upon him. How could he look upon me without loathing? Oh! the pain, the misery of that thought! More than once I left the little parlour, to pour forth my tears and

prayers. Was it wrong, was it wicked, to feel as if a miracle had been wrought in my behalf, for me and for my child—*our child?*

If the landlady would but have let me alone—left me to myself; but she would not; she had continually something fresh to tell, or to ask me to eat something, or to wonder what could keep Doctor Ridge; and then, at intervals, that bell!—Yet, had it not been for the tolling of that bell, I could not have believed in the reality of her death. And during the intervals I shivered lest—oh, Mary! but it is true—lest it should be a dream. The dream of the past night had been as vivid as the reality of that day! At last, the length of the hours became almost insupportable, and I so longing for the evening to come.

When the doctor's carriage drew up at the door, I felt as if he came unexpectedly, and before he could enter he was surrounded by inquirers. All knew Doctor

Ridge, and it was some time before Mrs. Burton was able to disentangle the kind man, and see him seated in her parlour.

I was highly favoured, for she had invited me to remain, and introduced me as "a—a lady who had some business at the Hall; but, of course, this terrible ——"

Mrs. Burton knew not how to finish her sentence.

"Yes, yes," said the good man, eyeing me at the same time curiously. "Yes, we have had a shock—a fearful shock; three physicians from London, besides myself—besides myself; nothing to be done—nothing. One celebrated man, whom the poor lady seems to have consulted, according to her maid's statement, frequently, without her husband's knowledge, said that for the last six months any very violent emotion might have caused this catastrophe. Poor lady! she hardly passed a day without a sufficiently 'violent emotion' to destroy life. I only wonder how it remained so long."

“Then, it was not poison, Sir,” said the landlady, in a disappointed tone.

“Poison! What! has such an idea got about? Poison!”

“Then the foreign lady did not poison her?”

“The foreign lady,” he repeated, growing very red, “is—a woman, or we should call her by another name. We have no hesitation in saying—(what is known to a household will be known to the county)—but we have no hesitation in saying that the ‘foreign lady,’ though she did not poison her, was the immediate cause of Lady Harvey’s death. There was a violent altercation in the carriage between the ladies—that is proved beyond a doubt—and the result was hæmorrhage, frightful hæmorrhage, and in a very short time before our arrival all was over.”

And then he endeavoured to turn my landlady’s attention to her particular ailment, but Mrs. Burton did not care for

that; she endeavoured to renew the subject.

“And poor Sir Oswald, Sir! he took on dreadful, some say; yet others again will have it he could not have cared for my Lady much of late. Ah! Sir, strange things are said!”

“My dear Mrs. Burton, my worthy friend and patient, did anything, however simple, *ever* happen that ‘strange things’ were *not* said? They know the duty of silence very imperfectly at Brecken Hall. The household has been (chiefly through that most intemperate Italian lady, whose nature seems steeped in burning jealousy) made acquainted with what we are certain Sir Oswald’s noble nature would have locked within his own bosom. The terms on which my Lady and Sir Oswald lived have been for some time past the talk of the county. Poor Lady Harvey became daily more ungovernable; it is so with all who do not know how to govern themselves; but he

had loved her, and the last half hour, they tell me, was terrible — terrible! And even then that woman forced herself into the room with some letters, and gave them to Sir Oswald, who threw them on the fire; and as they consumed, the poor dying lady said to him, ‘Bless you! bless you!’ They were her last words. Had we been there, we could have done nothing; and we are glad we were not. It was awful! That man is so noble, but so terribly proud. I wonder he survives it.”

The doctor was in such evident distress, that Mrs. Burton would not persist in her inquiries. The good old man passed his hand repeatedly across his brow, and then reverted to the landlady’s own illness in his old quaint way. “We are doing nicely here, Mrs. Burton — very nicely,” he said, taking her weak and weather-beaten wrist into his pale, withered hand, and *seeming*, at all events, to count the pulsations. “Ah! we are better — decidedly stronger.

You must go on as usual, and as we are to be at the Hall to-morrow, we will look in. We have still a long, a very long drive before we can get home and have a little rest. Such a night and such a day may God grant we never spend again! The Doctor was greatly shaken. "I have some old port, doctor," exclaimed Mrs. Burton; "sit ye down — not five minutes — and it shall be here." She flew out of the parlour.

I rose and stood before him. "Do you know me, doctor?"

"Know you! No, I hardly know anything. But speak again." He drew his spectacles from off his forehead, over his eyes, and holding both my hands, stared at me.

"Do you not remember me, doctor, and my baby, and the introduction you gave me to Mrs. Clary?"

"That cursed smallpox," he exclaimed, vehemently. "Yes, we inquired about

you of Mrs. Clary six months ago, and she told us — we could not have believed it — my pretty, pretty patient! And the child not marked — not a dot, she said.”

“ Doctor !” I exclaimed, — “ doctor, tell me, only tell me, before she returns, for the sake of those you love in heaven, and who are dearest to you on earth — tell me, did Sir Oswald love Caroline Mansfeld at the last — did he? Did he believe her to be true — true to him ?”

Doctor Ridge gasped as if for breath, and dropped both my hands at once.

“ Love her! — believe her true! Why, no, surely not — of course, not; but what is that to you? WHO are you to ask such questions? WHO are you? WHAT are you ?”

“ Doctor Ridge, to-morrow I will tell you, when I ask you to certify the birth of my child.”

“ Certify the birth of your child! To *whom* am I to certify it? *Why* am I to cer-

tify it? Tales — whisperings! — Can it be possible? Mildred Kennet — drowned — not drowned — the reason! — what reason? — Oh, impossible!”

“ You said you would be at Brecken Hall to-morrow; either *there* or *here* I will meet you, and tell you why I ask you to certify the birth of my child.”

The landlady's hand was on the latch of the door. I placed my finger on my lip. Doctor Ridge understood my meaning, but he drank the tumbler of mulled port with his eyes fixed on me, apparently not knowing what he drank.

“ Was it right, doctor — your old favourite port?” questioned Mrs. Burton.

“ Mysterious — most mysterious!” he repeated, without noticing her question; then walking backward to the door, his eyes still fixed on me, he repeated twice, “ but impossible! impossible!”

The good woman retired with an air of offended dignity.

“ I wonder if the dear soul is going crazy, and what was ‘mysterious’ and ‘impossible,’ and why he stared at you in that manner.”

To add to her perplexity, I told her I must go to Brecken Hall, and might be delayed there some little time. I hoped it would not inconvenience her.

The doctor's carriage drove off; clouds had gathered; and heavy raindrops descended, and the mutterings of distant thunder mingled with that bell. I found myself watching for the strokes with an intensesness that was positive pain. Suddenly the thunder drew nearer; an absolute tornado burst over the village; in an instant the street was cleared; the sturdiest trees bent like wands of willow in the hands of strong men; bright masses of lightning shot through the sweeping foliage; and crash after crash echoed from the woods, as if demons sported in the whirlwind.

The storm was strong and terrible while

it lasted, but it was of brief duration. Strange as it may seem, it completely revived me, and in the fresh and balmy air, purified from the heat and vapour of the day, I took my way to Brecken Hall.

The leaves were still dripping in the last rays of a golden sunset as I entered the park gates. They were unfastened, and the lodges at each side were untenanted. Though *in the flesh* I had never, as I have told you, been in the interior of the Hall, yet as the villagers, since the "proud Lady Harvey's" death, had permission on stated days to "enjoy" the park, I knew every turn and winding of its paths.

I knew what I was called on to do,—I thought I was sufficiently prepared to have gone on amid the glory of that sunset, and to have entered my husband's presence without any protracted tarrying. But I had miscalculated my strength, and was compelled to wait for twilight. I could not meet him in the garish light. The wil-

derness, the flower-gardens, the overshadowed parts of the plantations, were damp and deserted ; but without guide or thought, I entered a little summer-house. You know it, Mary — you know how carefully it is preserved, and called ‘ Grandmamma’s Rest ’ (it is on the very corner of the terrace, and commands the beautiful vale beneath, and the bow windows of the library). The window had been thrown up from the ground, and I could hear the distant hum of voices from within. Then Sir Oswald and a gentleman came out, and, pacing a few yards backward and forward, talked earnestly together. At last they shook hands ; both walked to the window, shook hands again, and the stranger passed onward. Sir Oswald continued walking, his head bent, his arms folded. After a time (the moon, I noticed, was rising, like a globe of pale gold, above the trees) he advanced, and leant upon the stone balustrade of the terrace. He continued there without

motion a long, long time — then turning slowly, he entered the library.

I followed. I knew I had an expiatory offering to make, but how would it be received? Would it be mercifully accepted, or would the altar and the sacrifice be overthrown, scattered to the winds, trampled under foot? God help me! it was a fearful trial. I stood for more than a minute just within the window, before Sir Oswald saw me. He did not question, but looked at me in evident astonishment.

I advanced.

A lamp on the table was alight, and my veil was thrown back; so that, after a moment, he recognised me as the mother of the boy whose life he had saved.

One idea only was connected in his mind with that event, and he said "You have come at an ill time — surely you must have heard — what could I need, to intrude on him at such a time?" He paused.

Again I advanced.

“ You must have heard ; — hereafter he would see me.”

I made another step towards him.

“ Surely,” he repeated, “ at such a time — he ought to be free from intrusion.”

The door was close to where I stood. Without turning round, I locked it — and then I raised my eyes to meet his, and gazed my very soul into them — sinking the while meekly on my knees before him.

How long this lasted I could not tell.

“ Oh, God ! — Oh, God ! — am I mad — am I mad ? ” came hurriedly from his lips, and as he drew nearer to me, I could no longer endure his gaze, but while I bent my head to the ground before him, I extended one hand to him — the hand on which he had placed the ring. Both rings were there — the little golden circle, and its diamond keeper — the only jewels I had retained. He grasped my hand tightly in his — he drew me by it to the lamp — he bent over it.

“Mildred! — the rings — the hand! — Mildred’s hand! — But” — he shook his head while glancing at my face — he forced back my bonnet, and touched my hair — raised me from the ground and placed me in a chair, he standing, and repeating — “Mildred — Mildred! Mildred in this world’s life! Then the cruel thought of that wild Italian had a foundation; yet *she* did not believe it; thank God for that! There was enough to weigh down her poor soul without her being” — I wonder the look which filled up that pause did not kill me — “being — what you made her — and, what have you not made me?”

“My sin — my sin!” I repeated, “not yours — God sees — God knows — God judges righteously — the sin was mine, not yours.”

“The waters to return their dead! So changed too — so changed!”

Yes — that was it — “*So changed!*”

He took my hand again (oh! how his trembled), peering curiously at the

rings, and then pushed back my sleeve. There was a mark there. My grandmother, in Old World reading, called it a "strawberry;" and Sir Oswald, once giving me a bracelet, said "it was to hide the strawberry."

"Yes! Mildred!" And then, in a moment, his pale face flushed—cheek, brow, one crimson glow.

"The child! the boy!" he exclaimed.

"Your child! your boy!" I said.

"Your child!"

CHAPTER XVI.

I DO not think that either Sir Oswald or I ever knew whether it was day or night. Half-sitting, half-kneeling at his feet, I went back, at his command, to the night at the Italian village, where I had been seen no more. I went back still farther—to the night of the fire. I reminded him how he had left me to perish, and saved *her*. I said how, in life, I had but one object—his happiness; that I then had conclusive proof of his love for her, and I resolved to sacrifice myself so that he might be free and happy!

I felt for an instant his hand on my head while I said this; but it was hastily withdrawn, and he muttered that my letter had said so much. I told him how I hung above the river,—how I was prevented, by

a merciful Power, from rushing unbidden into my Maker's presence; how, still firm to my purpose of securing his happiness, seeing that my very life was of no account with him, I determined to let him think I had gone to death, as I had resolved to trouble him no more.

I told him of my mountain wanderings, of my illness in the convent, where the Italian woman, now in the house, was at that time a pupil. This I had to repeat more than once. I said how my needle-craft won me such admiration; but that soon, very soon, I discovered I should become a mother! Of course, the sudden question came, "Why had I not written?"

I told him I had, and how all communication with the outer world had been cruelly cut off from me; but that at length, through the good offices of that same Italian girl, I escaped, she making me the partner of her elopement with the man Carlo, now also his guest; that I saw them married, but

that he would not suffer us to proceed together, and I made my way, as best I could, to England, believing I should arrive in time to prevent his marriage, and existing in the hope that, as the mother of his child, I should find favour in his eyes.

“Ah!” he said, “you mistook the momentary return of a passion for its eternity. I was fast learning to love you!”

Oh! for the love without the learning! I could not help murmuring that the fire had burnt a contrary belief into my heart.

He told me to continue my narrative.

I did so. I travelled over again my rapid journey from Dover to Brecken. I recalled to his mind that particular day at the small town where first I learned I was too late: that he had married in about four months after my supposed death. I did not mean this as a reproach, but I saw he felt it so. I told him how I had observed them both: and how they drove on in their full happiness, while I was insensible. I

told him Doctor Ridge was with me during my time of trial—in that house—that night!

“And knew you not?”

“How could he? He had never before seen me. I reminded him of my being so unfortunate in the House of Commons as to attract his attention, when all I had desired was to hear his voice once more! I told him how I had worked; how my boy had grown; how I rejoiced that the disease, which seized upon us both in the same hour, had left him without spot or blemish; and how I was educating myself to educate him—resolved that, when acknowledged, he should be worthy of the name he bore; I added that oftentimes the struggle to hush my mother-duty, and maintain my resolve not to disturb his happiness, was almost more than I could bear.”

Sir Oswald, in a cold, low voice, observed, “There had been no need for such a struggle; I was his wife—the mother of his son.”

I longed for a word or two of sympathy from him, but he coldly bade me "go on."

In broken accents, I told him of my agony when led to believe that, after all, my sacrifice had produced no fruit.

No word from him, but a stifled groan.

I entreated him to imagine what I had felt at Twickenham, when nature asserted her right, and drew father and son together.

No word — no sign — his hand pressed on his eyes, *to shut me out*. I told him of the Italian's visit, proceeding solely from her having recognised my needlework, which I had left upon the bank, and her entreaty that I would give my testimony to prove her marriage.

"Did she say nothing — nothing — about the domestic state of Brecken Hall?"

"She gave me reason to believe its master was unhappy."

"Nothing more?"

"Yes; she gave me great pain."

“Did she — did she offer *proof* of the truth of her statements?” he inquired, in a voice trembling with pride and passion.

“She did; she offered me letters.”

“And — you — read — them?”

He spoke slowly and bitterly, pausing between each word.

“No!” I said, and I rose up and stood before him; for my blood boiled with indignation that he — *he* should suppose me capable of so base an act.

“No, Sir Oswald, — no! I have been guilty of a grievous sin. Devoting myself to a life of labour, instead of a life of wealth and luxury, was nothing — no faithful heart ever weighed *that* for a moment; but I placed my idol between me and my God — I buried myself at your feet, without thought of resurrection. Unless I could recall the past, I cannot recall this sin. It was all *wrong*, and it cannot come *right*; and the bitter — the bitterest — punishment, even at this moment, is, that the result to

you, for whose dear sake I offered up this unholy sacrifice, has been a thousand times worse than to me. It was the insanity of a loving woman ; and a woman who could do what I have done, could not descend to a mean or unworthy act—could not even *look* upon those letters.”

He had pity on me then ; and in his calm, just voice, he asked me to forgive him ; he said, what he had said once before — I had more than *that* to forgive. “He had made me the innocent instrument of his revenge ;” adding, with deep emotion, “and all this for a woman who never cared for me but as the minister of her caprice.” And then he suddenly inquired where was the boy, and what I had called him.

“Oswald !”

He said, “It is well.”

I reminded him that when, last night, I arrived in the village, I was ignorant of all, now too well known — that the Italian’s

statement had determined me to delay no longer, but to see him at once.

“Did the Italian know that you were”—and he hesitated—it must have been so strange to say it then, but he did—“that you were Lady Oswald? or did she make her own keen conjecture?”

No; could he suppose I would have told her? I hoped hereafter he would question her as to what she knew of me.

I said this all too proudly. I thought Sir Oswald should have taken my sorrow and sufferings into account, and warmed towards his boy. I did not think as I ought to have done of his outraged feelings, and how his pride must have risen against the *cause* of such indignity—such betrayal of honour. I ought to have waited until he had overcome the shock of the past hours,—the disappointment and disgust which the perusal of my scarred features must have given him. Man seldom values the love, no matter how devoted,

that troubles him; and what a curse mine had wrought him! What could I have expected? Oh! I was cruelly unreasonable — shamefully unjust.

I added something about Doctor Ridge's kindness, and that I had promised him this evening to solve the mystery in which he found me. Doctor Ridge had abundant means of knowing what my life had been since my child's birth.

Sir Oswald took my hand. If mine was cold, I am sure *his* must have been colder.

"Mildred," he said, "whatever our future may be, believe this,— I can never doubt your honour."

There was a knock at the library door. I knew not what was wanted, but Sir Oswald said he would go at once.

"One moment," I exclaimed. "I come not here to-night with even a wish that you should daily see before you the blighted face,—that once was Mildred's. Some time since I reconciled my-

self to this affliction, in the faith that, unrecognised, I might devise some means of being near you — my boy winning your favour, growing into your heart — until a good time came when you would know him as your son ! A dream ! a dream ! — but *now* all I desire is to give him to you, and to leave you.”

He looked me stedfastly in the face.

“I will not,” he said, “ask you to spare yourself this fearful emotion, because you do not understand what ‘self’ means, but I ask you to spare *me*—spare me to-night. Let us not speak of the future just now—all is confused !”

“Confused,” I repeated, “but not obscure, even now ; I read your resolve.”

“I will return,” he said.

I did not dare to wait—I could not ! With a trembling hand, I wrote on a slip of paper my address at the village. Then, hastily pacing the terrace, I plunged into the wood, and soon arrived at the inn.

CHAPTER XVII.

I WANTED my child. Every moment of his absence seemed an age. My boy—my boy! I wrote to Mrs. Dunbar to bring him at once to Brecken. I did not even sign my own name until I knew Sir Oswald's pleasure. All day—all day—I watched and waited for a message from the Hall.

None came; and it was long past noon—a grave, still day, without breeze or sunshine.

It is wonderful how rapidly an excitement expires. The village so ruffled, so unlike itself, yesterday, to-day was about its work,—the only news of the morning being, that the family vault of the Harveys was not to be opened, as “my Lady” was to be buried at Mansfeld.

The person aggrieved by this intelligence was the village bricklayer and stonemason, who had made ready, in the churchyard, to open "the last house."

My landlady added that it was a blessing my Lady's father was dead.

I thought so, too!

I was in a state of the most helpless anxiety. I recalled every word and look of Sir Oswald. They yielded me small matter for hope. If he could not love me as a bride, how could he love me now?—and, like thousands of others, I cast my burden—at the last—where I should have cast it at the first. I could not define what I had expected, after my confession, and at such a time; but I sat at the little window of my bedroom, with an utterly crushed spirit. There was no strength left for either despair or hope. At last I saw Doctor Ridge's carriage a long way off,—it came from the Hall. I supposed he had gone thither by the back road. I heard him talk-

ing to Mrs. Burton for a few—it could only have been a few—minutes, though to me it seemed an age; his step came slowly up the stairs, and he stayed a moment outside the door—then knocked. I said “Come in,” and advanced to meet him. He made me a little formal bow. I held out my hand: he just touched it, “and bowed upon it,” in the old-fashioned way you read about in old novels—if, indeed, old novels are ever read. I *saw* that Sir Oswald had told him all; and in his first sentence he called me “Lady Harvey.”

Dear, kind friend! We both sat looking at each other, not so much for lack of words as from not knowing how to place them. At last he uttered a few disjointed sentences—broken and abrupt, yet full of heart and wisdom.

“Yes, yes, we have known women do strange things from excess of love; and I can understand how, in the very anguish of enthusiastic devotion, a woman dies for

a man, and is done with it: but to yield up a husband she adores to another, and live on——Madam ! We don't understand it. It is beyond nature — quite beyond nature ! and it is against God's law. But we beg your pardon, Lady Harvey. You yourself know best what you have suffered ; *we* know what Sir Oswald has endured. Sir Oswald is proud and sensitive—not well either—just now, and, consequently, cannot appreciate the value of the seed while the bitterness of the fruit is on his lips. Eh ! we remember the day so well ! Little did we think, when that dear babe was born, that he was the heir of Brecken Hall. Oh ! if you had but confided in us !”

“ Sir Oswald was happy then—my sacrifice was to secure his happiness.”

I could but repeat the story you have heard so often, Mary.

I have had nothing else to tell.

“ Alas ! Madam, was there but one soul to save ? Persistence in the sacri-

'face was both the wonder and—pardon us—the crime. The Indian woman on the funeral pyre is nothing to it! We are thankful to have lived to see such a wife; but we hope never to see such another—never! Sir Oswald desired we would say, that while Brecken Hall is tenanted as it now is, your presence there is impossible: but Sir Oswald wishes you to be more worthily lodged than you are at present, and has done us the honour to propose that you accept the shelter of our house until after the funeral. He wishes you to send for our young friend (if we may have the privilege so to call him); and desired us also to present you this, and to say he was grieved last night, when he returned to the library, to find you gone!”

“Did Sir Oswald say ‘*grieved*,’ Doctor Ridge?”

“Yes—no. We beg Lady Harvey’s pardon—he said ‘surprised.’”

The envelope contained a never-wanting proof of my husband's liberality; but no written word—no word—no word!—not one!

“Sir Oswald also wished me to say,” resumed the doctor, “that this morning he arranged with his solicitors that the Italians should immediately quit Brecken Hall. But, in gratitude for the service the lady had rendered you, Sir Oswald will make her independent of one of the most cold-blooded scoundrels that ever disgraced humanity.”

“Oh, may God bless his noble heart!” I exclaimed; “how grateful she must be!”

“We don't know,” replied the doctor, calmly. “We are old, and thought we understood human nature, but we may not have read woman rightly. She *ought* to have been grateful, and rejoiced, heart and soul, in her independence; but she flung herself into Carlo's arms, vowed she loved him more than her life, and would never leave him.”

My poor landlady's perplexity was distressing ; but, with all her boasting, she was too much in awe of Doctor Ridge to do more than silently observe his deferential manner to me, and show how readily she adopted it by a most respectful courtesy. As we drove off, another note to Mrs. Dunbar told where she was to bring my boy.

“ What ! not to the old house, doctor ? ”

“ No, Madam ; Sir Oswald did not think it good enough for us : though such is the effect of uprooting an old tree, that this is the first day we have felt sufficiently grateful for the change. It will be more fitting for Lady Harvey than the old one could have been made, and we are nearer to the Hall by two miles.”

The first day of my residence there was very dreary. The “ Pink ” looked fresher than ever ; she could not have been more attentive than she had been in old times, but now she curtsied with every sentence, and backed out of the room, pausing to

make her last curtsey the most respectful of all. Doctor Ridge was out all day.

Nothing fresh from Brecken Hall.

In the evening the doctor told me that Sir Oswald had been much occupied with his solicitors, cancelling the deeds of settlement, and preparing to refund the receipts of the Mansfeld property during the last few years. "Last night," continued Doctor Ridge, "he accompanied 'the remains' to Mansfeld Grange, where they await the arrival of the astonished heir-at-law, who would see them deposited in the family vault. Of course," he added, "The Romance of the Hall' is the theme of conversation everywhere. We dread its getting into the county papers!" And the dear, good man—as if I did not know it—repeated, "And he *is* so proud!—he *is* so proud!"

It would be as tedious as useless to attempt to chronicle my feelings.

The next day, when Dr. Ridge returned

from his "rounds," I presented my child to him. Mrs. Dunbar was slow, I thought, in comprehending the mystery ; but she did so at last, and then wept with me. Her calm, clear nature saw I had, neither by divine nor moral law, any right to make such a sacrifice.

How the dear old man exulted over my child ! — " the miniature of Sir Oswald " — how he caressed him ! how he fed him, reproving me all the time for doing so ! how he gave him his way in all things, even to the extent of being harnessed with a cord and playing at " horse " in the drawing-room, descanting on the necessity of not permitting children to have their own way, because of the suffering it entailed on themselves and others hereafter ! That was a happy evening. For years afterwards, my happiness came only with the memory of that evening.

No message from Sir Oswald.

The next day the doctor returned earlier

than usual from his rounds — “to-morrow,” said he, “the funeral was to take place.”

“Might I hope to see Sir Oswald after that?”

I asked the question meekly and tremblingly.

Doctor Ridge was confused, and looked it. “He could not say what Sir Oswald’s intentions were. One or two friends who dared to speak to him had entreated that he would do nothing rashly. He was of such value as a public man, both to his country and his party — he was bound to such important movements next session — and by that time the nine days’ wonder would have passed.” He paused.

I ventured to ask what it was Sir Oswald wished to do?

“We do not think,” replied the doctor, “that he knows himself. *One* thing only is determined — he must go abroad for a time. But we fear he will vacate his seat in Parliament; and, if it be possible to cut off

the entail, he—but—we hope that is by no means determined on—he is impressed with a wild desire to sell Brecken Hall—Brecken Hall, quite five hundred years in the family!” There was a long pause. “Madam,” he said at last, “you must let me take the boy there to-morrow.”

I had never known how deeply, deeply dear my boy was to me until that moment. I could hardly restrain the denial that hung upon my lips. Yet I had schooled myself for the separation I knew was at hand.

“Has Sir Oswald said so?”

“No, Madam, he has not. Madam, the presence of that child may preserve its father. It will be a new object—a new duty—a new affection. He has seen, admired, and loves him; but I read that he thinks it cruel to take him from a *widowed mother!*”

I did not start at the words, though I perfectly understood their meaning.

“His child will be to Sir Oswald a fresh existence. Five minutes after he enters the room, Sir Oswald will sooner cut off his right hand than deprive him of his ancestral home.”

“He shall go,” I said ; “but, doctor, not before noon. It is a long drive for the little fellow before his dinner. Just about four—would four do ?”

I saw tears in the old man’s eyes. “I am certain Sir Oswald will let me bring him back—if you wish it.”

“No, doctor, he must not return. It is so best. You are right. Oh, blessed knowledge! ‘The presence of the child may preserve the father!’ Even if I had the freshest face that ever met the morning, how could he endure my presence? But I give him my child—mine only for to-night! Now, leave me, doctor; I cannot bear another word.”

As soon as my boy slept I was beside him. I could neither weep nor pray. I

could only look at him. I sat there through the night, yet the time seemed but as an hour; and at daybreak I cut off a long silky curl — the curl you have often seen, Mary. If the night seemed short, what did the day? Daybreak and evening were blended together. The child's innocent delight at the proposed drive, his bound into the carriage, and his entreaty that I would go with him, were all trials which only a mother can understand. My darling child! I had no tears to shed. The heir of Brecken Hall! He looked glorious enough to be the heir of an empire, but *I* was widowed —and childless!

CHAPTER XVIII.

YES! I had spun my own winding-sheet, and now how to wear it?

Oh, the loving tenderness of my two friends! Doctor Ridge understood me better than did Mrs. Dunbar, who pined after the boy unceasingly. The doctor repeated over and over again how Sir Oswald kissed him, and how the child hung on him — and how the lawyer, who had been pondering over the title-deeds of Brecken Hall, under Sir Oswald's strict command, to discover some means of getting rid of a place which had become to him "accursed," leant back in his chair, and smiled regretfully as lawyers do when the prospect, far or near, of much law and little justice melts into "thin air."

For, with his eyes on his child, Sir Oswald said that Mr. Turnstile might lay by those title-deeds for the present; he must think over the question of selling Brecken before any steps could be taken in so important a matter!

But steps, and rapid ones, were taken in other matters.

Sir Oswald Harvey accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

Sir Oswald Harvey was *gone* abroad.

Yes, it was best and right: I had no reason to complain—it was right. But I was human: the heart of wife and mother beat against my bosom. Yet, as far as present life and sympathy went, I was a husbandless wife—a childless mother. I sometimes felt rebellion stir within me, and an evil influence whispered, “It is justice without mercy”—but I had strength to strike it down, and banish it. I knew it was best, much best, that I should see neither husband nor child for a long, long,

long time. I kept on repeating to myself, "it is best,"—"it is best." For nights I never closed my eyes; my eyelids were rigid, and would not close.

Mrs. Dunbar said my calmness terrified her; and Doctor Ridge harrowed up my very soul in vain efforts to make me weep. He repeated, over and over again, all about the young physician, one of his own dear pupils, who was gone with Sir Oswald, and would take care of those precious lives, and attend to my boy's education; and that Sir Oswald had said the child's first letter was to be to me. How frequently he repeated *that!* Then he roused me to attend to the duties of my new state.

I was obliged to receive the lawyer. I was told of a "settlement" on me, bewildering from its amount, and that I could reside at Brecken, or Ilford (the shooting-lodge we had gone to after our marriage), or in Grosvenor Place.

I would have preferred remaining with

Doctor Ridge; but he said I must not forget I was the wife of Sir Oswald Harvey. I must keep up his position in his absence, and attend to his interests. That was a powerful reason against the lethargy into which I might have fallen.

Keep up Sir Oswald's position, and attend to his interests during his absence! — "His interests," which were my child's interests — the interests of both combined. Mrs. Dunbar endeavoured to awaken me to the privileges, the duties, the responsibilities of my "*station*."

How I hated the word!

Mary, imagine, if it be possible, my complete isolation. It seemed as if Doctor Ridge and Mrs. Dunbar had receded from me almost to the confines of another world. I valued them highly; but my heart yearned for the companionship and sympathy from which I was cut off by my own act. The consequences that followed were perfectly natural and just — yes, just.

Perhaps I sometimes felt that my youth had been blighted by *his* act — he took me as the instrument of his revenge. But — HAD I NOT LOVED HIM? — was it not my glory to minister—ay, even to his vengeance ?

May no woman love as I loved! for it was idolatry — unreasoning idolatry — and brought its punishment.

Weeks, months, and years rolled away. Time did its work, and taught me my duties. And though Time made both the doctor and Mrs. Dunbar look older, he had no power over that portion of their being which belongs to Eternity. I have frequently found winter snow upon a bed of violets! I know many a white head associated with a heart as fresh as if it had not numbered twenty summers!

As years passed on I frequently heard from my boy; and I enjoyed the privilege of doing, both at Ilford and Brecken Hall, exactly what I knew Sir Oswald would

have desired. As time went by, and the romance, the censure, the curiosity, or the sympathy attached to me mouldered into tradition, I was "visited," and could have done more than "return calls" if it had pleased me; but my cross was too heavy to bear in the sunshine of society. I had the blessings of the poor, and the certainty that, through my means, a moral and intellectual improvement was progressing among the people, that would elevate them in Sir Oswald's eyes, and render them more capable of appreciating him. My desire has ever been to build up, not to pull down.

I often thought within myself, "How long, O Lord! how long?" but I kept silence.

Doctor Ridge one day, with great triumph, brought me a book which he said had created a very extraordinary excitement in Germany (where Sir Oswald resided). No one there knew the author. HE DID, and so did Lady Harvey!

I grasped it with a delight to which my heart had long been a stranger ; but when I opened it I was disappointed — it was in German, of which I knew not a word.

“Of course,” I said, “it would be immediately translated ?”

“Probably ; but its original strength—its force—would lose by translation.”

The next day I was in London. Whenever there, even for a day, I saw Mrs. Clary, to whom I had long since consigned the superintendence of my wardrobe, stipulating for perpetual mourning, as rich as she pleased in texture, but plainly made. I went to her *then* for an especial purpose. I engaged a German governess, and in four months I read and appreciated the force and beauty of the book. In six months I was also able to write to my boy in German, which had become almost his native language.

In his letters to me there was no mention of his father, and, therefore, I never

wrote even the name that was beating with every pulsation of my heart.

I suggested to Doctor Ridge what had been long struggling in my mind, and have never forgotten the alarmed expression of his kind face.

“Would it not be better if I resided abroad, and Sir Oswald and his son returned to England?”

“Oh, Madam! let us hope that you have not founded any plan on this idea. Keep quiet, my lady; let us entreat you to continue a blessing to all within your sphere! Have patience, gentle lady—have patience! If Sir Oswald thought such a change desirable, he would communicate it at once. Oh! dear Lady Harvey, do not romance again!”

I told him I never intended again to act without Sir Oswald's sanction; but dear Doctor Ridge had a troubled look for weeks after that suggestion—indeed, he never seemed quite assured as to what I might or

might not do. "Ah! dear lady," he would say, "I pray night and morning that every woman's strength and patience may increase as she grows older; but I say double prayers for you, dear Lady Harvey—double prayers for you!"

Good old man! I needed those prayers, and the prayers of all good Christians.

I always felt constrained during my residence at Brecken Hall—my visits were strictly duty visits. I could not do much there—all had been so well cared for. Mrs. Burton, when I called at the little inn, curtsied respectfully, and at last would burst into tears, as she took my extended hand. Poor Mrs. Burton! I always thought her tears physical rather than mental.

I generally met Mr. Turnstile at Brecken Hall. I did not like him to enter the sanctuary of Ilford. He startled me violently once, by saying that every fact regarding the inheritance was made so clear, by the depositions taken at the Italian convent,

that, in the event of Sir Oswald's death, there could be no dispute as to the rightful heir. Imagine a man telling *me* this, and adding, that he did so "to set my mind at rest!" I never had a moment's *unrest* on the subject!

I could have struck him to the earth when he spoke of "the event of Sir Oswald's death!"

There was but one creature in the world I avoided more than I did Mr. Turnstile, and that was the old sexton of Brecken Church.

Time wore on. Ilford, under my care, grew into great beauty. I often wondered when my boy would be sent to one of the Universities; but it could hardly be time yet, and I was hardened in patience. Again the same thing — and again — time rolling on, giving no sign of pity or pardon from HIM. I had fits of positive despair, believing that all the world was stone, and that a river of fire was running through my own heart!

How was it that I had dared to wrench the command of God and man to my own purpose — to overturn the table of the law, and look for peace, and love, and joy as the fruit of my outrage on my husband — on THAT woman — and on society ?

Has any one ever dared this without punishment ? An evil act unconsecrates the best motive.

Did I tell you that I went to meet the Italian in London, to establish by my evidence her marriage ? but there came as clear proof that he had been previously married to a French lady, whose accommodating silence endured as long as he could pay for it. The priest I had seen was a real priest, and the ceremony — but under the circumstances it was nought. Sir Oswald's bounty was so entirely her's, that the "Count" (who had been simply the pet *tenore* of the Conservatoire at Milan), finding she hardened her heart against him, returned to his legal wife, who in her turn repudiated him. By this time her indignation had worn itself out, and the

still lovely and infatuated creature received her "Carlo" again; and wrote me, saying she had paid her last quarter's annuity for a dispensation, and that Carlo was the "soul of her affections."

Soon after, news came that he had been assassinated in a small Italian town, where they had given a concert; and, after the lapse of some years — spent I know not how — she again wrote me a farewell, having entered a convent. This last letter came long after your birth, my own Mary. Pardon my lingering — I will now continue.

We (Mrs. Dunbar and I) were at Ilford. I had returned from the infant school, in which I delighted, and Mrs. Dunbar was reading out to me a list of books for the lending library connected with the schools, when we heard a carriage stop at the gate, and then wind along the avenue. The morning-room did not command a view of the entrance. Suddenly the door was flung open —

“Mother!”

All my memories were uprooted in an instant. I had no child; but it was a beautiful youth that clasped me in his arms, and called me “mother!” I could hardly believe my senses. I had frequently pictured him; but no picture my fancy painted was like my living son! MY SON! — so like, yet so unlike, his father! Smaller, with a brighter, a more mirthful expression than ever moved his father’s noble features; and so much light and sunshine about his eyes and brow!

We both forgot dear Mrs. Dunbar, but at last I looked for and found her. She had fainted.

“Is there no one you would ask for, mother?”

“Sir Oswald — is he well?”

Oh! how my boy’s brow clouded. “No, he is not,” and he looked anxiously in my face; “for some months—for a year—he has been ill at times, and much changed; but

he would not have you told — he thought he should get better. He could not bear the idea of returning to England, but the physicians said his native air may restore him.”

“ Native air !—is he in England ? ”

“ At Brecken Hall. We arrived there last night. I came thence this morning. He bade me say you sent me to him as an olive-branch ; the branch has grown, and at last blossomed. Will you come with it to Brecken Hall ? ”

And then Doctor Ridge entered. He was so overcome he could say but little ; and I—oh ! how I hoped against hope ! I could not believe in any danger to affect life—I, who had seen Sir Oswald so ill, yet restored in one month. In three months he would be well as ever.

But when I knelt beside his sofa in the library, and saw his face so changed, and felt the bony pressure of his hand—oh, my heart-ache ! my heart-ache ! It was long,

long before he spoke ; but he held my hands firmly — his eyes bent on the ground. At last he said —

“ Mildred, the time has arrived when we must forgive each other.” How generous was that to *me!* — to *ME!* And then he lifted up my face between his hands, and pushed back my hair, and smiled.

“ Mildred, there are no scars to be seen now. Time has effaced them.

“ *My poor Mildred!*”

Mary, I cannot bear to write the hard words he heaped upon himself, making his marriage a bitter wrong to the schoolmaster’s daughter!

“ No, no,” said he ; “ my madness was born of revenge — yours of blind and blinding idolatry. I sacrificed you — you sacrificed yourself. Both were contrary to God’s law ; and both brought punishment to both.”

Let me turn from those months, those years of hopes and fears, for a brief moment.

The romance of my life ended with the death of that most beautiful and most unhappy woman, and I pass rapidly over the realities that followed. You have often heard of your grandfather's lingering illness ; you recollect your father's devotion to that gift which—(for better or worse, who can tell ?— for it was God's gift) — rendered him indifferent to all things else. The pride and impatience of his childhood yielded to the influence his father at once obtained and held over him ; but Sir Oswald loved music himself with too deep and earnest an enthusiasm not to appreciate his son's rare talent.

Living as they did in the loftiest and purest musical atmosphere, it was no wonder that the boy's ardent nature concentrated itself upon sweet sounds, and that the learning, the duties, the ambition forming part and parcel of his birthright, became irksome to him, especially as, at that time, music in England was not comprehended

as it is at present — and if a country gentleman could sing a hunting song, he was considered as highly skilled in music as a gentleman ought to be.

Your father turned from the hunting song as he did from the hunting field. He had no political bias—no ambition for public life. His music rendered him popular at Oxford, but he achieved none of the honours of his University.

While on his couch of prolonged suffering, Sir Oswald felt that his son, whom he loved with the deepest affection, would never fill the place he himself had rashly abandoned in his county. This chafed and distressed him; but all was forgotten when the boy's fingers pressed the keys of his organ, and his matchless voice poured forth the immortalities of Handel or Haydn.

Ah! me, my Mary! I saw but too clearly that those who have the noble birthright of Englishmen should not pass the impressive morning of their days amid foreign

influences. How much that is solid — how much that is endearing and enduring — is sacrificed to attain an accent, or perfect an accomplishment!

The passing hours were freighted with the consciousness that my act had exiled my dear ones, at a period when they should have been in the home of their ancestors!

Dear, faithful Doctor Ridge — and other helpless doctors with great names — held frequent consultations; but their varied opinions merged into one. They all said that the cause of Sir Oswald's fading was evident. "His feelings had been too intense — his brain overworked." "Great and active minds were subject to this infidelity of the brain." "No: nothing could be done." "The disease flourished and triumphed only in the richest soil. It must hold its course to the end."

Oh, Mary, can you conceive the utter and entire wretchedness of so terrible a verdict!

They sought to comfort me by the assurance of "no immediate danger."

Days, weeks, months flew with the rapidity of moments. I dared not think upon their fleeting.

Sometimes his mind would return, as if from a far-off country, and re-invigorate the body; he would arise in his old glory, state a great fact, elucidate its truth, and overthrow its opponents—but that always harmed him. He would fade again into forgetfulness of the past. It was the rapid sunset, without the hues that promise a glorious sunrise.

Gradually, however, Sir Oswald ceased to care for the things of this world, or the people thereof. He was without power, but he was without pain; and I could not bear even his son to note the increasing obscurity of his great mind. I would suffer no one but Doctor Ridge to approach him. I seldom needed sleep or

rest: my all of life was to minister to his wants.

I knew the lamp was brilliant still, though I saw not its beams. It shone on another land, as the sun and moon do when we are in darkness. There were sometimes flashes of the old light; and the sound of the organ stealing through the door, especially in the twilight, never failed to recall his spirit to its earthly home. His shadowy hand would mark the time on the coverlet, and frequently he would whisper through a movement, commanding forth my voice to swell the melody.

Yet those weeks and months — that daily and nightly service — brought to me an earthly HEAVEN.

He was all mine now — ALL MINE! If I had broken down in my watching, he must have perished. He would take nothing but from my hand: medicine — food — Mildred must give it. Mildred must read to him. He would oft-times commence

repeating that beautiful psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd;" and when his memory failed, press my hand that I might continue it. Mildred must make his bed and smoothe his pillows; and he would sometimes push them from him, and have no pillow but her bosom.

When he did not call me "Mildred," he called me "Blessing!" And once he said, "My wife — not to be taken from me on earth or in Heaven!"

And at last, and in his extreme weakness, the wonderful light returned to his eyes, and he said—

"Pray for me—pray for me—my Love, my Wife, my Blessing!"

That is all.

And yet not all! for well I know that the Removal called Death brought him nearer to me, and made me dearer to him. I have the continual consciousness of his

presence — permitted, when I need it most, to soothe, to aid, and to guide me. I know him to have strengthened me while writing the story which you, dear Mary, have now read.

Well, you may smile! I but record my own faith in a great and ever fruitful mercy; and, for the deep love I bear you, pray that hereafter you may feel the same influence,—if it increase your happiness, as it surely has increased mine! but God knows best who needs and who does not need more than the Written Word in which you trust — nothing doubting.

Your father, my Mary, married young, and your sweet child-mother but smiled on you and — died.

You remember your dear father—his pure and spotless life, his lovingness, his charity; a courtly gentleman in all things; idolised by the poor, but unsatisfactory (as a county gentleman) to the rich. He was utterly without the talents that beget am-

bition ; next to music he desired ease, and wished me to manage all things as I had managed them during the long absence of father and son abroad. I thus became what you, my darling, have only known me — a calm concentrated woman of business, the Etna in my heart burnt out, and the lava overgrown by the utilities of life. I saw how impossible it was to change my son's nature, or his habits, and I set myself the task of promoting, as far as a woman could, all that my husband's approval had sanctified. You remember your dear father's fragile beauty, and how in the early stage of manhood, he was called from us, his passion for sweet sounds governing him to the last. He truly made

“ A swan-like end,
Fading in music.”

You can remember also the snowy locks, the cheerful voice, the tender blessings, of your very old godfather, Doctor Ridge ; and

how you have often delighted to tease the patient lovingness of a certain "Granny Dunbar"—dear, tender, true, and well-beloved friend—who shared with me the natural cares and anxieties belonging to my position as sole guardian to my granddaughter,— Mary Oswald Harvey.

On you, my darling, now rest the honours and the hopes of a noble house. The world will think of that when they look upon you ; but the schoolmaster's daughter sees in you far more than " storied urn or animated bust " can tell. To her your voice is as the echo of that which long ago struck upon her heart in her father's school-room. Your eyes are of HIS colour; your hair is of the same hue, and curls as did his whose form will be my last earthly memory. In all things you, my heart's darling, are the faint sweet echo of what HE was, an echo at times, as if from another world — nothing more, but oh ! so sweet !

* * * * *

Dear Mary — beloved child — hope of my narrowing future — I would not have chronicled these memories, but that I desired you should know the facts of what might hereafter be told to you or to your children — and perhaps be wrongfully told — as the Romance of Brecken Hall.

I need not tag a moral to my tale. If the records I have written have not taught it, my story has been told in vain :

WRONG CAN NEVER BE RIGHT !

THE END.

LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE



13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST & BLACKETT'S NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE PRIVATE DIARY OF RICHARD DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS, K.G. 3 v. 8vo. Portrait, 30s.

"Among others of the Duke of Buckingham's celebrated contemporaries and acquaintances, of whom anecdotes will be found in these volumes, are—George the Fourth; the Dukes of Clarence, Wellington, and Bedford; the Marquesses of Hertford and Lansdowne; the Earls of Shrewsbury and Westmoreland; Lords Grenville, Brougham, Errol, Yarborough, Arundel, Hardwick, Blessington, and Dalhousie; Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Canning; Ladies Shrewsbury, Westmoreland, Ponsonby, Errol, Brabazon, Howard, &c. Amongst the Royal and distinguished Foreigners are the Kings of the Two Sicilies and Bavaria, the Pope, and the principal Cardinals, the Duke and Duchess of Modena, Maria Louisa, widow of Napoleon, Queen Hortense, Louis, Jerome and Lucien Buonaparte, Châteaubriand, and a host of the political, literary, and artistic celebrities of the period over which the Diary extends.

"A very amusing chronicle. That it will be read with curiosity we cannot doubt."—ATHENÆUM.

"This Diary is well worth reading, and may obtain considerable popularity. The writer's position gave him the *entrée* into circles more talked of than known, and his observations are marked by good sense and shrewdness."—GLOBE.

"This Diary has intrinsic interest apart from the tact and intelligence of the writer. It abounds in anecdote."—EXAMINER.

"These volumes are throughout lively and attractive, and fully sustain the Duke's character as an intellectual and inquiring man. The pictures of society are clever."—DAILY NEWS.

"The portion of these entertaining volumes which relate to politics, serves to throw additional light on the struggles of Canning, Wellington, and Peel for office, and the opinions of the King on the principal questions which then agitated the public mind. The sketches which the Duke gives of the society of the time are remarkable not less for their vividness than their fidelity. The entries in the Diary respecting the Bonaparte family are replete with interest at the present day."—OBSERVER.

THE LIFE OF J. M. W. TURNER, R.A., from Original Letters and Papers furnished by his Friends and Fellow Acade- micians. By WALTER THORNBURY. 2 vols. 8vo. with Portraits and other Illustrations, 30s.

"Mr. Thornbury has had every possible advantage for the accomplishment of this biography—a personal acquaintance with Turner, the advice of Mr. Ruskin, and the ready assistance of all Turner's friends. Of the immense mass of materials brought together Mr. Thornbury has made skilful use, and constructed an honest memorial of the great painter. He has done his part ably. The artist will refer to these volumes frequently for authentic information regarding the great modern master and his works, and the student of life and manners will find in them a rich store of entertainment."—DAILY NEWS.

"Mr. Thornbury has honestly endeavoured to paint Turner truly. His work must not only be considered as the very best that he has written, but as a valuable addition to our artistic biography. To the professional student it will be especially interesting."—SPECTATOR.

"A work of standard merit, that will prove invaluable as one of reference and instruction to the art student, and entertaining and agreeable to the general reader."—HERALD.

"Henceforward nobody can have any excuse for reopening this subject. Mr. Thornbury has collected a mass of information larger in quantity and fuller in detail than Turner's uncommunicative and secretive character could have justified any one in expecting."—BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

"A clever and highly attractive work."—EXAMINER.

"All the statistics of Turner's pictures, and their years of exhibition, are carefully enough elaborated here, and will be valuable to collectors."—SAT. REVIEW.

"The Life of Turner has evidently been a labour of love to Mr. Thornbury. The mere appendix is a valuable contribution to the art literature of the day."

DUBLIN UNIVERSITY PRESS.

13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

**MESSRS. HURST & BLACKETT'S
NEW WORKS—CONTINUED.**

**THE LIFE & CORRESPONDENCE OF ADMIRAL
SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.** From his Private Papers
and Official Documents. By Major-General **ELEERS NAPIER**.
2 vols. 8vo. with Portrait and Charts, 30s.

"Sir Charles Napier will undoubtedly rank among the first of our sea worthies. This work brings all the incidents of the Admiral's life together, so as to create a story of great interest, with much that is amusing for the general, and more that is instructive to the professional reader."—**ATHENÆUM**.

"This personal history of another of England's great sea worthies possesses an interest which will not pass away with the present generation. We know of no book so likely to excite the enthusiasm of English youth as Southey's Life of Nelson and these memoirs of Admiral Napier."—**DAILY NEWS**.

FRENCH WOMEN OF LETTERS. By **JULIA
KAVANAGH**, Author of "Nathalie," &c. 2 vols. 21s.

"Miss Kavanagh's book is a very good one. It will obtain not only a popular success, but also a permanent place in the library of the literary student. It covers ground new to most English readers. Ten women—all very famous in their day—are taken as centres of literary history in successive periods; and in the story of their lives, still more in the analysis given of their leading works, we have the several stages of French life truly reflected."—**EXAMINER**.

TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND. By **FREDRIKA
BREMER**. Translated by **MARY HOWITT**. 2 vols. 21s.

"This work is a good specimen of what travels should be—intelligent, unaffected, and giving exact, as distinguished from vague, impressions. The whole book bears the impress of individuality, and the author's own enjoyment is conveyed to the reader with a vividness not often obtained."—**ATHENÆUM**.

**DOWN SOUTH ; or, an Englishman's Experience at the
Seat of War in America.** By **S. PHILLIPS DAY, Esq.**, Special Cor-
respondent of the *Morning Herald*. 2 vols. with Portraits of
President Davis and General Beauregard, 21s.

"We have in these interesting and amusing volumes a perfect *résumé* of all the most important events that have transpired since the breaking out of civil war in America. There cannot be a doubt that "Down South" will be read with avidity, and that the facts it relates, and the opinions it offers, will have an immense influence in forming and maintaining a correct notion of the actual bearing and state of American affairs amongst ourselves. Not the least valuable portion of the book is that which gives sketches of the leading men of the Southern party."—**MESSENGER**.

**THE OKAVANGO RIVER: A NARRATIVE OF
TRAVEL, EXPLORATION, AND ADVENTURE.** By
CHARLES JOHN ANDERSSON, Author of "Lake Ngami." 1 vol.
with Portrait and numerous Illustrations, 21s. bound.

"Mr. Andersson's book, from the number of well-told adventures, its rich fund of information, and spirited illustrations, will command a wide circle of readers. The interest of his story never flags for a moment."—**ATHENÆUM**.

**MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE, MOTHER OF
NAPOLEON III.** 2 vols. with Portrait, 21s.

"This book furnishes a biography of the beautiful and unhappy Queen more satisfactory than any we have yet met with. Besides the main subject of the volumes, and the interesting notices they contain of Louis Napoleon's childhood and youth, they afford us glimpses of many of the celebrities of the Empire and the Restoration."—**DAILY NEWS**.

HENRY IV. AND MARIE DE MEDICI. From
Original and Authentic Sources. By **MISS FREEE**. 2 vols. 21s.

"In presenting so interesting a narrative, Miss Freer has done good service to the public, besides enhancing her own well-earned reputation."—**SUN**.

13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST & BLACKETT'S
NEW WORKS—CONTINUED.

TRAVELS IN THE REGIONS OF THE AMOOR,
AND THE RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS ON THE CONFINES OF INDIA AND
CHINA. By T. W. ATKINSON, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., Author of
"Oriental and Western Siberia." Dedicated, by permission, to
HER MAJESTY. Second Edition. Royal 8vo. with Map and
83 Illustrations. Elegantly bound.

"A noble work. The entire volume is admirable for its spirit, unexaggerated
tone, and the mass of fresh materials by which this really new world is made
accessible to us."—*ATHENÆUM*.

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE: SKETCHES OF MILITARY
LIFE. By the Author of "Flemish Interiors," &c. 3 vols. with
Illustrations.

"The information the author conveys, and the lively and graphic style in which
he writes, will secure the attention both of military readers and civilians. Many
interesting anecdotes are recorded, and the general public will find in these pages
a considerable amount of entertainment."—*SUN*.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF
FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV. Edited, from rare and un-
published Documents, by Dr. CHALLICE. 2 vols. Portraits, 21s.

LADY CHARLOTTE PEPYS' DOMESTIC SKETCHES
IN RUSSIA. 2 vols. 21s.

A SAUNTER THROUGH THE WEST END. By
LEIGH HUNT. 1 vol. 10s. 6d.

THE RECREATIONS OF A SPORTSMAN. By LORD
WILLIAM LENNOX. 2 vols. with Illustrations, 21s.

MEMORIALS OF ADMIRAL LORD GAMBIER,
G.C.B., with Original Letters from LORDS CHATHAM, NELSON,
CASTLEBROUGH, MULGRAVE, HOLLAND, MR. CANNING, &c. Edited,
from Family Papers, by LADY CHATTETON. 2 vols.

A BOOK ABOUT DOCTORS. By J. C. JEAFFRESON,
Esq. Revised and Cheaper Edition, 10s. 6d.

"This is a rare book, a compliment to the medical profession, and an acqui-
sition to its members; a book to be read and re-read; fit for the study and the
consulting room as well as the drawing-room table and the circulating library.
We thank Mr. Jeaffreson most heartily for the mirth and solid information
of his volume."—*LANCET*.

THE MEDICAL MISSIONARY IN CHINA: a
Narrative of Twenty Years' Experience. By WILLIAM LOCKHART,
F.R.C.S., of the London Missionary Society. 2nd Edition. 1 vol.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A FOX-HUNTER. By
SCRUTATOR. 1 vol. with Illustrations.

ALSO JUST READY.

THE LIFE OF THE REV. EDWARD IRVING;
with Selections from his Correspondence. By MRS. OLIPHANT.
2 vols. 8vo. with Portrait.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' MUSICAL RECOLLEC-
TIONS. By HENRY F. CHORLEY. 2 vols.

**THE NEW & POPULAR NOVELS,
TO BE HAD AT ALL LIBRARIES.**

THE LAST OF THE MORTIMERS. By the Author
of "Margaret Maitland," &c. 3 vols.

"A charming book—simple, quaint, and fresh. It is a novel 'comme il y en a peu,' and it will go far to sustain the reputation of the author of 'Margaret Maitland.'"—**ATHENSUM.**

"This work has given us much pleasure. It is not only good in itself, but is quite as clever in its way as 'Mrs. Margaret Maitland,' and has something stronger in the fibre of its romance. It is the most powerful and most interesting novel by this authoress, and the world will thank her for more tales as good and as amusing."—**GLOBE.**

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A FAST YOUNG LADY. By **MRS. GREY**, Author of "The Gambler's Wife," &c. 3 v.
OWEN. By the Author of "High Church," &c. 3 vols. (In April.)

THE WHITE ROSE OF CHAYLEIGH. 3 vols.

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN. By **SCRUTATOR**,
Author of "Recollections of a Fox-Hunter." 3 vols.

"There is plenty of stirring interest in this novel to make it generally acceptable, particularly to those readers who enjoy manly sport."—**MESSENGER.**

A GREAT SENSATION. By **E. HENEAGE DERING**,
Esq. 3 vols.

"The aim of this book is good and wholesome. There is a good deal of clever writing in it."—**SATURDAY REVIEW.**

"An interesting story of life in the higher classes of society. The author writes in an attractive manner."—**POST.**

SATURDAY STERNE. By **J. E. READE**, Esq. 3 vols.
(In April.)

THE CASTLEFORD CASE. By **FRANCES BROWNE.**
Dedicated to the **MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE.** 3 vols.

"Apart from the touching circumstances under which this novel has been written, it will be welcomed by multitudes for its own merits."—**DAILY NEWS.**

WHICH DOES SHE LOVE? By **COLBURN MAYNE**,
Esq. 3 vols.

"A thoughtful, high-toned novel."—**POST.**

"This novel will be read and admired for its pleasant and agreeable character. It is an exceedingly interesting story."—**OBSERVER.**

WHITE AND BLACK: A Story of the Southern States.

"This story is full of interest. The characters are life-like and free from exaggeration, and the style is vigorous, fresh, and English."—**GLOBE.**

FOREST KEEP. Dedicated to **LADY TREVELYAN.**

"The author has a vivid fancy, and a remarkable power of eloquent description."—**JOHN BULL.**

THE HOME AT ROSEFIELD. By **E. COPPING.**

NOTICE TO QUIT. By **W. G. WILLS.** 3 vols.

A HERO IN SPITE OF HIMSELF. By **CAPT. MAYNE REID.** From the French of **Luis de Bellemare.** 3 vols.

UNDER THE SPELL. By the Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Wildflower," &c. 3 vols.

EAST AND WEST. By **J. FRAZER CORKRAN.** 3 vols.

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS, 13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH ST.

NOW IN COURSE OF PUBLICATION,
HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY
OF CHEAP EDITIONS OF
POPULAR MODERN WORKS.

ILLUSTRATED BY MILLAIS, LEECH, FOSTER, GILBERT, &c.

Each in a single volume, elegantly printed, bound, and illustrated, price 5s.

A volume to appear every two months. The following are now ready.

VOL. I.—SAM SLICK'S NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE.

Messrs Hurst and Blackett have very fitly inaugurated their Standard Library of Popular Modern Works with this admirable volume. With regard to this we can truly say—Who can tire of the genuine sallies, the deep wisdom wrapped up in merry guise, and the side-splitting outbursts of genuine wit, in the pages of Haliburton? 'Nature and Human Nature' is particularly full of all these qualities; and to those who love a good laugh, when they can enjoy it accompanied by good matter for reflection, and who have not yet read this production of Sam Slick, we can heartily recommend this elegant Edition."—*Critic*.

"The first volume of Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library of Cheap Editions forms a very good beginning to what will doubtless be a very successful undertaking. 'Nature and Human Nature' is one of the best of Sam Slick's witty and humorous productions, and well entitled to the large circulation which it cannot fail to obtain in its present convenient and cheap shape. The volume combines with the great recommendations of a clear, bold type, and good paper, the lesser, but attractive merits, of being well illustrated and elegantly bound."—*Pict.*

VOL. II.—JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.

"This is a very good and a very interesting work. It is designed to trace the career from boyhood to age of a perfect man—a Christian gentleman, and it abounds in incident both well and highly wrought. Throughout it is conceived in a high spirit, and written with great ability. This cheap and handsome new edition is worthy to pass freely from hand to hand as a gift book in many households."—*Examiner*.

"The new and cheaper edition of this interesting work will doubtless meet with great success. John Halifax, the hero of this most beautiful story, is no ordinary hero, and this his history is no ordinary book. It is a full-length portrait of a true gentleman, one of nature's own nobility. It is also the history of a home, and a thoroughly English one. The work abounds in incident, and many of the scenes are full of graphic power and true pathos. It is a book that few will read without becoming wiser and better."—*Scotsman*.

"'John Halifax' is more than worthy of the author's reputation. We consider, indeed, that it is her best work. There are in it many passages of beautiful writing. The closing scenes are deeply pathetic, and few will lay down the book without tearful eyes. 'John Halifax' is a picture, drawn with a masterly hand, of one of nature's gentlemen. Everybody who ever reads a novel should read this one."—*Critic*.

"The story is very interesting. The attachment between John Halifax and his wife is beautifully painted, as are the pictures of their domestic life, and the growing up of their children; and the conclusion of the book is beautiful and touching."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. III.—THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

"Independent of its value as an original narrative, and its useful and interesting information, this work is remarkable for the colouring power and play of fancy with which its descriptions are enlivened. Among its greatest and most lasting charms is its reverent and serious spirit."—*Quarterly Review*.

"A book calculated to prove more practically useful was never penned than 'The Crescent and the Cross'—a work which surpasses all others in its homage for the sublime and its love for the beautiful in those famous regions consecrated to everlasting immortality in the annals of the prophets, and which no other writer has ever depicted with a pencil at once so reverent and so picturesque."—*Sun*.

[CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.]

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED).

VOL. IV.—NATHALIE. BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

" 'Nathalie' is Miss Kavanagh's best imaginative effort. Its manner is gracious and attractive. Its matter is good. A sentiment, a tenderness, are commanded by her which are as individual as they are elegant. We should not soon come to an end were we to specify all the delicate touches and attractive pictures which place 'Nathalie' high among books of its class."—*Athenæum*.

" A more judicious selection than Nathalie could not have been made for Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library. The series as it advances realises our first impression, that it will be one of lasting celebrity."—*Literary Gazette*.

VOL. V.—A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

" A book of sound counsel. It is one of the most sensible works of its kind, well-written, true-hearted, and altogether practical. Whoever wishes to give advice to a young lady may thank the author for means of doing so."—*Examiner*.

" These thoughts are good and humane. They are thoughts we would wish women to think: they are much more to the purpose than the treatises upon the women and daughters of England, which were fashionable some years ago, and these thoughts mark the progress of opinion, and indicate a higher tone of character, and a juster estimate of woman's position."—*Athenæum*.

" This really valuable volume ought to be in every young woman's hand. It will teach her how to think and how to act. We are glad to see it in this Standard Library."—*Literary Gazette*.

" These thoughts are worthy of the earnest and enlightened mind, the all-embracing charity, and the well-earned reputation of the author of 'John Halifax.'"—*Herald*.

VOL. VI.—ADAM GRAEME OF MOSSGRAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MRS MARGARET MAITLAND."

" 'Adam Graeme' is a story awakening genuine emotions of interest and delight by its admirable pictures of Scottish life and scenery. The plot is cleverly complicated, and there is great vitality in the dialogue, and remarkable brilliancy in the descriptive passages, as who that has read 'Margaret Maitland' would not be prepared to expect? But the story has a 'mightier magnet still,' in the healthy tone which pervades it, in its feminine delicacy of thought and diction, and in the truly womanly tenderness of its sentiments. The eloquent author sets before us the essential attributes of Christian virtue, their deep and silent workings in the heart, and their beautiful manifestations in the life, with a delicacy, a power, and a truth which can hardly be surpassed."—*Morning Post*.

VOL. VII.—SAM SLICK'S WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

" We have not the slightest intention to criticise this book. Its reputation is made, and will stand as long as that of Scott's or Bulwer's Novels. The remarkable originality of its purpose, and the happy description it affords of American life and manners, still continue the subject of universal admiration. To say thus much is to say enough, though we must just mention that the new edition forms a part of the Publishers' Cheap Standard Library, which has included some of the very best specimens of light literature that ever have been written."—*Messenger*.

VOL. VIII.—CARDINAL WISEMAN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST FOUR POPES.

" A picturesque book on Rome and its ecclesiastical sovereigns, by an eloquent Roman Catholic. Cardinal Wiseman has here treated a special subject with so much generality and geniality, that his recollections will excite no ill-feeling in those who are most conscientiously opposed to every idea of human infallibility represented in Papal domination."—*Athenæum*.

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED).

VOL. IX.—A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"We are always glad to welcome Miss Muloch. She writes from her own convictions, and she has the power not only to conceive clearly what it is that she wishes to say, but to express it in language effective and vigorous. In 'A Life for a Life' she is fortunate in a good subject, and she has produced a work of strong effect. The reader having read the book through for the story, will be apt (if he be of our persuasion) to return and read again many pages and passages with greater pleasure than on a first perusal. The whole book is replete with a graceful, tender delicacy; and in addition to its other merits, it is written in good careful English."—*Athenæum*.

"A Life for a Life is a book of a high class. The characters are depicted with a masterly hand; the events are dramatically set forth; the descriptions of scenery and sketches of society are admirably penned; moreover the work has an object—a clearly defined moral—most poetically, most beautifully drawn, and through all there is that strong reflective mind visible which lays bare the human heart and human mind to the very core."—*Post*.

VOL. X.—THE OLD COURT SUBURB. BY LEIGH HUNT.

"A delightful book, that will be welcome to all readers, and most welcome to those who have a love for the best kinds of reading."—*Examiner*.

"A more agreeable and entertaining book has not been published since Boswell produced his reminiscences of Johnson."—*Observer*.

VOL. XI.—MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS.

"We recommend all who are in search of a fascinating novel to read this work for themselves. They will find it well worth their while. There are a freshness and originality about it quite charming, and there is a certain nobleness in the treatment both of sentiment and incident which is not often found."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XII.—THE OLD JUDGE. BY SAM SLICK.

"These popular sketches, in which the Author of 'Sam Slick' paints Nova Scotian life, form the 12th volume of Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library of Modern Works. The publications included in this Library have all been of good quality; many give information while they entertain, and of that class the book before us is a specimen. The manner in which the Cheap Editions forming the series is produced deserves especial mention. The paper and print are unexceptionable; there is a steel engraving in each volume, and the outsides of them will satisfy the purchaser who likes to see a regiment of books in handsome uniform."—*Examiner*.

VOL. XIII.—DARIEN. BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

"This last production of the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross' has the same elements of a very wide popularity. It will please its thousands."—*Globe*.

"Eliot Warburton's active and productive genius is amply exemplified in the present book. We have seldom met with any work in which the realities of history and the poetry of fiction were more happily interwoven."—*Illustrated News*.

VOL. XIV.—FAMILY ROMANCE; OR, DOMESTIC ANNALS OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

BY SIR BERNARD BURKE, ULSTER KING OF ARMS.

"It were impossible to praise too highly this most interesting book, whether we should have regard to its excellent plan or its not less excellent execution. It ought to be found on every drawing-room table. Here you have nearly fifty captivating romances with the pith of all their interest preserved in undiminished poignancy, and any one may be read in half an hour. It is not the least of their merits that the romances are founded on fact—or what, at least, has been handed down for truth by long tradition—and the romance of reality far exceeds the romance of fiction."—*Standard*.

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED);

VOL. XV.—THE LAIRD OF NORLAW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MRS MARGARET MAITLAND."

"We have had frequent opportunities of commending Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library. For neatness, elegance, and distinctness the volumes in this series surpass anything with which we are familiar. The Laird of Norlaw will fully sustain the author's high reputation. The reader is carried on from first to last with an energy of sympathy that never flags."—*Sunday Times*.

VOL. XVI.—THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN ITALY.

BY MRS G. GRETTON.

"Mrs Gretton had opportunities which rarely fall to the lot of strangers of becoming acquainted with the inner life and habits of a part of the Italian peninsula which is the very centre of the national crisis. We can praise her performance as interesting, unexaggerated, and full of opportune instruction."—*The Times*.

"Mrs Gretton's book is timely, life-like, and for every reason to be recommended. It is impossible to close the book without liking the writer as well as the subject. The work is engaging, because real."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XVII.—NOTHING NEW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"We cordially commend this book. The same graphic power, deep pathos, healthful sentiment, and mastery execution, which place that beautiful work, 'John Halifax' among the English Classics, are everywhere displayed."—*Chronicle*.

"'Nothing New' displays all those superior merits which have made 'John Halifax' one of the most popular works of the day. There is a force and truthfulness about these tales which mark them as the production of no ordinary mind, and we cordially recommend them to the perusal of all lovers of fiction."—*Post*.

VOL. XVIII.—THE LIFE OF JEANNE D'ALBRET.

BY MISS FREER.

"We have read this book with great pleasure, and have no hesitation in recommending it to general perusal. It reflects the highest credit on the industry and ability of Miss Freer. Nothing can be more interesting than her story of the life of Jeanne D'Albret, and the narrative is as trustworthy as it is attractive."—*Post*.

VOL. XIX.—THE VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

"We know no novel of the last three or four years to equal this latest production of the popular authoress of 'Margaret and her Bridesmaids.' If asked to classify it, we should give it a place between 'John Halifax' and 'the Caxtons.'"—*Herald*.

VOL. XX.—THE ROMANCE OF THE FORUM.

BY PETER BURKE, SERJEANT AT LAW.

"A work of singular interest, which can never fail to charm and absorb the reader's attention. The present cheap and elegant edition includes the true story of the Colleen Bawn."—*Illustrated News*.

VOL. XXI.—ADÈLE. BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

"'Adèle' is the best work we have read by Miss Kavanagh; it is a charming story, full of delicate character painting. The interest kindled in the first chapter burns brightly to the close."—*Athenæum*.

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS, 18, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET

Under the Especial Patronage of Her Majesty.

Published annually, in One Vol., royal 8vo, with the Arms beautifully engraved, handsomely bound, with gilt edges, price 31s. 6d.

LODGE'S PEERAGE

AND BARONETAGE,

CORRECTED BY THE NOBILITY.

THE THIRTY-FIRST EDITION FOR 1862 IS NOW READY.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE is acknowledged to be the most complete, as well as the most elegant, work of the kind. As an established and authentic authority on all questions respecting the family histories, honours, and connections of the titled aristocracy, no work has ever stood so high. It is published under the especial patronage of Her Majesty, and is annually corrected throughout, from the personal communications of the Nobility. It is the only work of its class in which, *the type being kept constantly standing*, every correction is made in its proper place to the date of publication, an advantage which gives it supremacy over all its competitors. Independently of its full and authentic information respecting the existing Peers and Baronets of the realm, the most sedulous attention is given in its pages to the collateral branches of the various noble families, and the names of many thousand individuals are introduced, which do not appear in other records of the titled classes. For its authority, correctness, and facility of arrangement, and the beauty of its typography and binding, the work is justly entitled to the place it occupies on the tables of Her Majesty and the Nobility.

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Historical View of the Peerage.	The Archbishops and Bishops of England, Ireland, and the Colonies.
Parliamentary Roll of the House of Lords.	The Baronetage, alphabetically arranged.
English, Scotch, and Irish Peers, in their orders of Precedence.	Alphabetical List of Surnames assumed by members of Noble Families.
Alphabetical List of Peers of Great Britain and the United Kingdom, holding superior rank in the Scotch or Irish Peerage.	Alphabetical List of the Second Titles of Peers, usually borne by their Eldest Sons.
Alphabetical List of Scotch and Irish Peers, holding superior titles in the Peerage of Great Britain and the United Kingdom.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Dukes, Marquises, and Earls, who, having married Commoners, retain the title of Lady before their own Christian and their Husbands' Surnames.
A Collective List of Peers, in their order of Precedence.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Viscounts and Barons, who, having married Commoners, are styled Honourable Mrs.; and, in case of the husband being a Baronet or Knight, Honourable Lady.
Table of Precedency among Men.	Mottos alphabetically arranged and translated.
Table of Precedency among Women.	
The Queen and the Royal Family.	
Peers of the Blood Royal.	
The Peerage, alphabetically arranged.	
Families of such Extinct Peers as have left Widows or Issue.	
Alphabetical List of the Surnames of all the Peers.	

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Lodge's Peerage must supersede all other works of the kind, for two reasons: first it is on a better plan; and, secondly, it is better executed. We can safely pronounce it to be the readiest, the most useful, and exactest of modern works on the subject."—*Spectator*.

"A work which corrects all errors of former works. It is the production of a herald, we had almost said, by birth, but certainly by profession and studies, Mr. Lodge, the Norroy King of Arms. It is a most useful publication."—*Times*.

"As perfect a Peerage of the British Empire as we are ever likely to see published. Great pains have been taken to make it as complete and accurate as possible. The work is patronised by Her Majesty; and it is worthy of a place in every gentleman's library, as well as in every public institution. The fact that this elaborate and comprehensive work has now reached so many editions, is enough to remove all doubt or question relative to its pretensions as an authentic and accurate record. For upwards of a quarter of a century it has served the purpose of a complete guide book and reference to the origin, names, history, titles, arms, mottoes, &c., of the aristocracy of the kingdom; and the increasing patronage it receives may be regarded as a reward due to its intrinsic merits no less than as a testimony of the public confidence."—*Herald*.

"As a work of contemporaneous history, this volume is of great value—the materials having been derived from the most authentic sources, and, in the majority of cases, emanating from the noble families themselves. It contains all the needful information respecting the nobility of the empire, and is indeed the most faithful record we possess of the aristocratic element of our society at the present day."—*Post*.

"This work should form a portion of every gentleman's library. At all times the information which it contains, derived from official sources exclusively at the command of the author, is of importance to most classes of the community; to the antiquary it must be invaluable, for implicit reliance may be placed in its contents."—*Globe*.

"When any book has run through so many editions, its reputation is so indelibly stamped, that it requires neither criticism nor praise. It is but just, however, to say, that 'Lodge's Peerage and Baronetage' is the most elegant and accurate, and the best of its class. The chief point of excellence attaching to this Peerage consists neither in its elegance of type nor its completeness of illustration, but in its authenticity, which is insured by the letter-press being always kept standing, and by immediate alteration being made whenever any change takes place, either by death or otherwise, amongst the nobility of the United Kingdom. The work has obtained the special patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty, which patronage has never been better or more worthily bestowed."—*Messenger*.

"'Lodge's Peerage and Baronetage' has become, as it were, an 'institution' of this country; in other words, it is indispensable, and cannot be done without, by any person having business in the great world. The authenticity of this valuable work, as regards the several topics to which it refers, has never been exceeded, and, consequently, it must be received as one of the most important contributions to social and domestic history extant. As a book of reference—indispensable in most cases, useful in all—it should be in the hands of every one having connections in, or transactions with, the aristocracy."—*Observer*.

"A work that has reached so many editions may certainly be regarded as too firmly established in public estimation to stand in need of our good word. Yet it is only justice to point out, that as the editors receive their facts from the nobility, the work is of necessity *the* Peerage. Other books on the same subject are doubtless useful in their way, but if we want the very latest information, we must turn to Lodge, and we shall not be disappointed. When we add that the arms of every peer are accurately engraved, and that the printing and getting up of the volume are all that can be desired, we have said enough to induce all who have occasion to consult a Peerage to resort to this, the standard work on the subject."—*Gentleman's Mag.*

HURST & BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS, 13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19



-

!



